

OEDIPUS:
A
TRAGEDY.
As it is ACTED at His
Royal Highness
THE
DUKE's Theatre.

The AUTHORS
Mr. DRYDEN, and Mr. LEE.

The Fourth Edition.

*Hi proprium deos & partum indignantur honorem
Ni teneant. —— Virgil.
Pos exemplaria Graecia,
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna. — Horat.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for Richard Bentley in Russel-street in
Covent-Garden. 1692.

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As if a ACTHID ee Hid

Royal Highness

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DURKE's House

MARYLEBONE FLD.

London

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London

PREFACE.

THOUGH it be dangerous to raise too great an expectation, especially in works of this Nature, where we are to please an unsatiable Audience, yet 'tis reasonable to prepossess them in favour of an Author, and therefore both the Prologue and Epilogue inform'd you, that Oedipus was the most celebrated piece of all Antiquity. That Sophocles, not only the Greatest Wit, but one of the greatest Men in Athens, made it for the Stage, at the Publick Cost; and that it had the reputation of being his Master-piece, not only amongst the Seven of his which are still remaining, but of the greater Number which are perish'd. Aristotle has more than once admir'd it in his Book of Poetry, Horace has mentioned it: Lucullus, Julius Caesar, and other noble Romans, have written on the same Subject, though their Poems are wholly lost, but Seneca's is still preserv'd. In our own Age, Corneille has attempted it, and it appears by his Preface, with great success: But a judicious Reader will easily observe, how much the Copy is inferior to the Original. He tells you himself, that he owes a great part of his success to the happy Episode of Theseus and Dirce; which is the same thing, as if we should acknowledge, that we were indebted for our good fortune, to the under-plot of Adrastus, Eurydice, and Creon. The truth is, he miserably fail'd in the Character of his Hero: if he desir'd that Oedipus should be pitied, he shou'd have made him a better man. He forgot that Sophocles had taken care to shew him in his first entrance, a just, amerciful, a successful, a Religious Prince, and in short a Father of his Country: instead of that, he has drawn him suspicious, desirous more anxious of keeping the Theban Crown, than solicitous for the safety of his People: Elector'd by Theseus, contemn'd by Dirce, and scarce maintaining a second part in his own Tragedy. This was an error in the first Composition, and therefore never to be mended in the second or the third. He introduc'd a greater Heroe than Oedipus himself; for when Theseus was once there, that Companion of Hercules

The Preface.

tales must yield to none : The Poet was oblig'd to furnish him with business, to make him an Equipage suitable to his dignity, and by following him too close, to lose his other King of Brantford in the Crowd. Seneca on the other side, as if there were no such thing as Nature to be minded in a Play, is always running after pompous expressions, pointed sentences, and Philosophical notions, more proper for the Study than the Stage : The French-man follow'd a wrong scent ; and the Roman was absolutely at cold Hunting. All we cou'd gather out of Corneille, was, that an Episode must be but not his way : and Seneca supply'd us with no new hint, but only a Relation which he makes of his Tira-has raising the Ghost of Lajus : which is here perform'd in view of the Audience, the Rights and Ceremonies so far his, as he agreed with Antiquity, and the Religion of the Greeks ; but he himself was beholding to Homer's Tirades in the Odysseys for some of them : and the rest have been collected from Heliodore's Ethiopiques, and Lucan's Erichtho. Sophocles indeed is admirable every where : And therefore we have follow'd him as close as possibly we cou'd : But the Athenian Theater, (whether more Perfect than ours is not now disputed) had a perfection differing from our. You see there in every Act a single Scene, (or two at most) which manage the business of the Play, and after that succeeds the Chorus, which commonly takes up more time in singing, than there has been employ'd in speaking. The principal person appears almost constantly through the Play ; but the inferiour parts seldom above once in the whole Tragedy. The Conduct of our Stage is much more difficult, where we are oblig'd never to lose any considerable character which we have once presented. Custom likewise has obtain'd, that we must form an under-plot of second persons, which must be depending on the first, and their by-walks must be like those in a Labyrinth, which all of em lead into the great Parterre : or like so many several lodging Chambers, which have their outlets into the same Gallery. Perhaps after all, if we could think so, the ancient method, as 'tis the easiest, is also the most Natural, and the best. For variety as 'tis manag'd, it is often subject to breed distractiōn : and while we would please too many ways, for want of art in the conduct, we please in none. But we have given you more already than was necessary for a Preface, and for odds we know, may gain no more by our distractiōn. Thus that foolish Nation is like to do, who have taught their Citizens to fight in long, that at last they are in a condition to unarm them.

Dramatis Personæ.

Oedipus	Mr. Betterton.
Adrastantus	Mr. Smith.
Creon	Mr. Samsford.
Tiresias	Mr. Harris.
Hæmon	Mr. Crosby.
Alcander	Mr. Williams.
Diocles	Mr. Norris.
Pyracmon	Mr. Roman.
Phorbas	Mr. Gillo.
Dymas	
Ægeon	
Ghost of Lajus	Mr. Williams.

W O M E N.

Jocasta	Mrs. Betterton.
Eurydice	Mrs. Lee.
Manto	Mrs. Evans.

Priests, Citizens, Attendants, &c.

SCENE, THEBES.

OEDIPUS.

PROLOGUE.

• **W**HEN Athens all the Gracian State did guide,
And Greece gave Laws to all the World beside,
Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit,

Supreme in Wisdom one, and one in Wit:

And Wit from Wisdom differ'd not in those,
But as 'twas Sung in Verse, or said in Prose.

Then, Oedipus, on Crowned Theatres,
Drew all admiring Eyes and listening Ears;
The pleas'd Spectator showed every Line,
The Noblest, maniest, and the Best Design!

And every Critick of each learned Age
By this just Model has reform'd the Stage.

Now, should it fail? (if Heaven avert our Fear)

Damn it in silence, lest the World should bear

For were it knowne this Poem did not please,

You might set up for perfect Savages:

Your Neighbours would not look on you as Men:

But think the Nation all turn'd Fists ogen.

'Faith, as you manage matters, 'tis not fit

You should suspect your selves of too much Wit.

Drive not the Task too far, but spare the Head.

And, for this once, be not more Wise than Greece.

See twice! Do not peccant to Damning Fall,

Like true born Britains, who ne're think at all:

Pray be advis'd; and though at Mons you won,

On pointed Heads do not charge the rust,

With some respect to ancient War proceed;

You take the four first Councils for your Creed.

But when you can't reason ably by,

And on the private Spirit alone reh'ye,

You turn Fanatick in your Poetry.

If you will stand by the olden Lawes,

You needs will have your pen'worths of the Play:

And come resolv'd to Damn, because you pay

Record it in your book of the Fact,

The first Play bury'd since the Woollen Act.

OEDIPUS.

O E D I P U S

ACT I. SCENE Thebes.

The Curtain rises to a plaintive Tune, representing the present condition of Thebes; Dead Bodies appear at different parts of the Streete; Some faintly go over the Stage, others drop dead on the Stage.

Enter Alcander, Diocles, Pyracmon.

Alc. **M**E thinks we stand on Ruines; Nature shakes About us; and the Universal Frame So loose, that it but wants another Push To leap from off its Hinges.

Dioc. No Sun to cheer us; but a Bloody Globe Has rows above; a bald and Beams of Fire, His Face o're-grown with Scurf: the Son's set too? Shortly he'll be an Earth.

Pyr. Therefore the Seasons Lye all confus'd; and by the Heaven's neglected, Forgets themselves: Blind Winter meets the Summer In his Mid-way, and, seeing not his Master, Has driv'n him headlong back: And the raw damp, With flaggy Wings fly heavily about, Scattering their Pestilential Colds and Rhumes Through all the lazy Air.

Alc. Hence Murrains follow, On bleating Flocks, and on the lowing Herds At last, the Malady Grew more domestick, and the faithful Dog Dy'd at his Master's Feet.

Dioc. And next his Master: For all those Plagues which Earth and Air had brooded, First on inferior Creatures try'd their force, And last they seiz'd on Man.

Pyr. And then a thousand deaths at once advanced And

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And every Dart took place; all was so sudden,
That scarce a man fell; one but began
To wonder, and straight fell a wonder too;
A third, who stoop'd to raise his dying Friend,
Dropt in the pious Act. Heard you that groan?

[Groan with]

Dioe. A Troop of Ghouls took flight together there:
Now Death's grown riotous, and will play no more
For single Stakes, but Families and Tribes:
How are we sure we breath not poor ou'rself,
And that next minute,

Our Bodies cast into some common Pit,
Shall not be built upon, and overlaid
By half a people?

Ale. There's a Chain of Causes
Link'd to Effects; invincible Necessity
That what e're is, could not but so have been;
That's my security.

To them Enter Creon.

Creon. So had it need, when all our Streets lye cover'd
With dead and dying Men,
And Earth exposes Bodies on the Pavements
More than she hides in Graves!
Betwixt the Bride and Bridegroom have I seen
The Nuptial Torch do common offices
Of Marriage and of Death.

Dioe. Now, Oedipus,
(If he return from War, our other Plague)
Will scarce find half he left, to grace his Triumph.

Pyr. A feble Pean will be sung before him.

Ale. He would do well to bring the Wives and Children

Of Conquer'd Argians to renew his Thebes.

Creon. May Funerals meet him at the City Gates.

With their detested Omen.

Dioe. Of his Children.

Creon. Nay, though she be my Sister, of his Wife.

Ale. Oh that our Thebes might once again behold

A Monarch Theban born!

Dioe. We might have had one.

Pyr. Yes, had the people pleas'd.

Creon. Come, you're my Friends; here's a young Queen

The Queen my Sister, after Laius's death,

Fear'd to lye single; and supply'd his place

With a young Succession; he

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3

Dioe. He much resembles
Her former Husband too.

Alc. I always thought so.

Pyr. When twenty Winters more have grizzl'd his black Locks
He will be very *Laius*.

Creon. So he will.

Mean time she stands provided of a *Laius*
More young and vigorous too, by twenty Springs,
These Women are such cunning Purveyors!
Mark where their Appetites have once been pleas'd,
The same resemblance in a younger Lover
Lies brooding in their Fancies the same Pleasures,
And urges their remembrance to desire.

Dioe. Had merit; not her dotage, been consider'd,
Then Creon had been King; but *Oedipus*,

A stranger!

Creon. That word stranger, I confess
Sounds harshly in my Ears.

Dioe. We are your Creatures.
The people prone, as in all general ills,
To sudden change; the King in Wars abroad,
The Queen a Woman, weak and unregarded;
Eurydice the Daughter of dead *Laius*,
A Princess young and beautious, and unmarried.
Methinks from these disjoyned Propositions
Something might be produc'd.

Creon. The Gods have done
Their part, by sending this commodious Plague,
But oh the Prince! her hard heart is shut
By Adamantine Locks against my Love.

Alc. Your claim to her is strong; you are betroth'd.

Pyr. True! in her Nonage.

Alc. But that let's remov'd.

Dioe. I heard the Prince of *Agas*, your *Adrestus*,
When he was hostage here——

Creon. Oh name him not! the bane of all my hopes;
That hot-brain'd, head-long Warriour, has the Charms
Of youth, and somewhat of a Lucky rashness,
To please a Woman yet more Fool than he.
That thoughtless Sex is caught by outward form
And empty noise, and loves it self in man.

Alc. But since the War broke out about our Frontiers
He's now a Foe to Thebes.

Creon. But is not so to her; see, she appears;
Once more I'll prove my Fortune: you infinuate
but

O E D I P U S.

Kind thoughts of me into the multitude ;
Lay load upon the Court ; gull 'em with freedom ;
And you shall see 'em toss their Tails, and gad,
As if the Breeze had stung 'em.

Dico. We'll about it. *Eexit Alcander, Diocles, Pyramus.*

Enter Eurydice.

Creon. Hail, Royal Maid ; thou bright *Eurydice* !
A lavish Planet reign'd when thou wert born ;
And made thee of such kindred-mold to Heaven,
Thou seem'st more Heaven's than ours.

Euryd. Cast round your Eyes,
Where late the Streets were so thick down with Men,
Like Cadmus Brood-they justled for the passage :
Now look for those erected heads, and see 'em
Like Pebbles paving all our publick ways :
When you have thought on this, then anwer me,
If these be hours of Courtship ?

Creon. Yes, they are ;
For when the Gods destroy so fast, 'tis time
We should renew the Race.

Euryd. What, in the midst of horror ?

Creon. Why not then ?
There's the more need of Comfort.

Euryd. Impious Creon !

Creon. Unjust *Eurydice* ! can you accuse me
Of love, which is Heaven's precept, and not fear
That Vengeance, which you lay pursues our Crimes,
Should reach your Petjuries ?

Euryd. Still th' old Argument.
I bad you cast your Eyes on other Men,
Now cast 'em on your self; think what you are.

Creon. A Man.

Euryd. A Man !

Creon. Why doubt you ? I'm a Man.

Euryd. 'Tis well you tell me so, I should mistake you.

For any other part o'th' whole Creation,

Rather than think you Man, hence from my sight,

Thou poyson to my Eyes.

Creon. 'Twas you first poison'd mine ; and yet meduline
My Face and Person shou'd not make you sport.

Euryd. You force me, by your importunitie,
To shew you what you are.

Creon. A Prince, who loves you.

And since your pride provokes me, worth your love,
Ev'n at his highest value.

Euryd. Love from thee ?
Why love renounc'd thee e're thou saw'st the light :
Nature her self start back when thou wert born,
And cry'd the work's not mine —
The Midwife stood agast ; and when she saw
Thy Mountain back, and thy distorted legs,
Thy face it self,
Half-minted with the Royal stamp of Man,
And half o'recome with beast, stood doubting long,
Whose right in thee were more :
And knew not if to burn thee in the flames,
Were not the holier work.

Creon. Am I to blame, if Nature threw my body
In so perverse a mold ? yet when she cast
Her envious hand upon my supple joints,
Unable to resist, and rumpled 'em
On heaps in their dark lodging, to revenge
Her bungled work, she stampt my mind more fair :
And as from Chaos, buddled and deform'd,
The Gods struck fire, and lighted up the Lamps
That beautifie the Sky, so she inform'd
This ill-shap't Body with a daring Soul :
And making less than Man, she made me more.

Eurid. No, thou art all one error; Soul and Body ;
The first young tryal of some unskill'd Pow'r,
Rude in the making Art, and Ape of Jove.
Thy crooked mind within, hunch'd out thy back,
And wander'd in thy limbs : to thy own kind
Make love, if thou canst find it in the World ;
And seek not from our Sex to raise an off-spring,
Which, mingled with the rest, would tempt the Gods
To cut off Humane Kind.

Creon. No ; let 'em leave
The Argian Prince for you : that Enemy
Of Thebes has made you false, and break the Vows
You made to me.

Euryd. They were my Mother's Vows
Made when I was at Nurse.
Creon. But hear me, Maid ;
This Blot of Nature, this deform'd loath'd Creon,
Is Master of a Sword, to reach the blood
Of your young Master, spoil the Gods fine work,
And stab you in his heart.

Euryd. This when thou doest,
Then mayst thou still be curs'd with Loving me :
And, as thou art, be still unpitied, loath'd,
And let his Ghost —— No, let his Ghost have rest ;
But let the greatest; fiercest, foulest Fury,
Let Creon haunt himself.

[Exit Eurydice.]

Creon. 'Tis true, I am
What she has told me, an offence to light :
My body opens inward to my Soul,
And lets in day to make my Vices seen,
By all discerning Eyes, but the blind vulgar.
I must haste c're Oedipus return,
To snatch the Crown and her ; for I still love ;
But love with malice ; as an angry Cur
Snarls while he feeds, so will I seize and stanch
The hunger of my love on this proud Beauty,
And leave the seraps for Slaves.

Enter Tiresias, leaning on a Staff, and led by his Daughter Manto.

What makes this blind prophetick Fool abroad ?
Wou'd his Apollo had him, he's too holy.
For Earth and me, I'll shun his walk, and seek
My popular Friends.

[Exit Creon.]

Tiresias. A little farther, yet a little farther ;
Thou wretched Daughter of a dark old man,
Conduct my weary steps ; and thou who seest
For me and for thy self, beware thou tread not
With impious steps upon dead Corps ; —— Now stay ;
Methinks I draw more open, vital air,
Where are we ?

Manto. Under Covert of a wall :
The most frequented once, and noisy part
Of Thebes, now midnight silence reigns even here ;
And grass untrodden springs beneath our feet.

Tir. If there be nigh this place a Sunny bank,
There let me rest a while : a Sunny bank !
Alas how can it be, where no Sun shines !
But a dim winking Taper in the Skyes,
That nods, and scarce holds up his drowsy head
To glimmer through the damps.

[A Noise within, follow, follow, follow, A Creon.]

A Creon, A Creon, A Creon.]
Hark ! a tumultuous noise, and Creon's name.
Thrice eccho'd.

Man.

OEDIPUS.

Man. Fly, the tempest drives this way,
Tir. Whither can Age and Blindness take their flight?
If I could fly, what cou'd I suffer worse,
Secure of greater ill! [Noise again, Creon, Creon, Creon.

Enter Creon, Diocles, Alcander, Pyracmon; followed by the Crowd.

Creon. I thank ye, Countrymen; but must refuse
The honours you intend me, they're too great;
And I am too unworthy; think agen,
And make a better choice.

1 Cit. Think twice! I ne're thought twice in all my life:
That's double Work.

2 Cit. My first word is always my second; and therefore I'll have
No second word; and therefore once again I say, A Creon.

All. A Creon, a Creon, a Creon.

Creon. Yet here me, Fellow Citizens.

Dioc. Fellow Citizens! there was a word of kindness.

Alc. When did Oedipus salute you by that familiar name?

1 Cit. Never, never; he was too proud.

Creon. Indeed he could not, for he was a stranger:
But under him our Thebes is half destroyed.

Forbid it Heav'n the residue should perish:

Under a Theban born,

'Tis true, the Gods might send this Plague among you,

Because a stranger rul'd: but what of that,

Can I redrest it now?

3 Cit. Yes, you or none.

?Tis certain that the Gods are angry with us

Because he Reigns.

Creon. Oedipus may return: you may be ruin'd.

1 Cit. Nay, if that be the matter, we are ruin'd already.

2 Cit. Half of us that are here present, were living men bot-

Yesterday, and we that are absent do but drop and drop,

And no man knows whether he be dead or living. And

Therefore while we are found and well, let us satisfie our

Consciences, and make a new King.

3 Cit. Ha, if we were but worthy to see another Coronation,

And then if we must dye, we'll go merrily together.

All. To the question, to the question.

Dioc. Are you content, Creon should be your King?

All. A Creon, a Creon, a Creon.

Tir. Hear me, ye Thebans, and thou Creon, hear me;

1 Cit. Who's that would be heard, we'll hear no man:
We can scarce hear one another.

OEDIPUS

Tir. I charge you by the Gods to hear me.
2 Cit. Oh, 'tis ~~old~~ a Proph~~e~~t, we must hear him; 'tis the old blind
Prophet that sees all things.

3 Cit. He comes from the Gods top, and they are our batters;
And therefore in good manners we must hear him. Speak, Prophet.

2 Cit. For coming from the Gods, that's no great matter.
They can all say that; but he's a great Scholar, he can make
Almanacks, and he were ~~wise~~ ~~prophetic~~, and therefore I say hear him.

Tir. When angry Heaven scatters its plagues among you,
Is it for nought, ye Thebans! are the Gods
Unjust in punishing? are there no Crimes
Which put this Vengeance down?

1 Cit. Yes, yes, no doubt there are some Sins stirring
That make the cause of all.

3 Cit. Yea there are Sins; or we should have no Taxes.

2 Cit. For my part I can speak it with a safe Conscience,
I ne're sin'd in all my life.

1 Cit. Nor I either to stow a few stolls, Taxes, Dishes, I ne're

3 Cit. Nor I, nisself and yd not sinallise.

2 Cit. Then we are all justified, the Sins lies not at our doors.

Tir. All justified alike, and yet all guilty;
Were every Man's false dealing brought to light,
His Envy, Malice, Lying, Perjuries,

His Weights and Measures, th' other Man's Extortions,
With what Face could you tell offended Heaven?

You had not sin'd?

2 Cit. Nay, if these be sins, the case is alter'd; for my part I never
Thought any thing but Murder had been a sin.

Tir. And yet, as if all these were less than nothing,
You add Rebellion to 'em; impious Thebans!

Have you not sworn before the Gods to serve
And to obey this Oedipus, your King?

By publick voice I chal^dle you to answer me,
If this be true.

2 Cit. This is true; but it's a hard World Neighbours,
If a Man's Oath must be his Master.

Creon. Speak Diocles; all goes wrong.

Diocles. Nowhere your Countrymen, Countyness of Thebes?

This holy Sir, who pretends you with Oaths,
Forgets your first; were you not sworn before
To Laius and his Blood?

All. We were; we were.

Dior. While Laius has a lawfull Successor,
Your first Oath still must stand: Banished by force nowhere
Is Heir to Laius; let her marry Creon:

Offended

O E D I P U S

• 3

Offended Heav'n will never be appeas'd
While Oedipus pollutes the Throne of Laius.

A stranger to his Blood.

All. We'll no Oedipus, no Oedipus, till we have him.

1. Cst. He puts the Prophet in a Mouth-hole.

2. Cst. I knew it wou'd be so; the last man ever speaks the best reason.

Tir. Can benefits thus dye, ungrateful Thebes?

Remember yet, when, after Laius's death,

The Monster Sphinx laid your rich Country waste.

Your Vineyards spoil'd, your labouring Oxen few,

Your selves for fear mew'd up within your Walls,

She, taller than your Gates, o're-look'd your Town,

But when she rais'd her Bulk to flail above you,

She drove the Air around her like a Whirlwind,

And shaded all beneath her till noon-tide down.

She clapp'd her leathern wing against your Town,

And thrall'd our her long neck ev'n to your doors.

Dise. Alc. Pyr. We'll hear no more.

Tir. You durst not meetin' Temples,

T'invoke the Gods for aid, the proudest he

Who leads you now, then crow'd like a dard Lark.

This Croon-shook for fear,

The blood of Laius cruddled in his Veins:

Till Oedipus arriv'd,

Call'd by his own high courage and the Gods,

Himself to you a God: ye offer'd him

Your Queen, and Crown; but what was then your Crown?

And Heav'n authoriz'd it by his laces!

Speak then, who is your lawful-King?

All. 'Tis Oedipus.

Tir. 'Tis Oedipus indeed; your King more lawful.

That yet you dream: for something still there lies

In Heav'n's dark Volume, which I read through mists:

'Tis great, prodigious, 'tis a dreadful birth

Of wondrous Fate; and now, just now unfolding.

I see, I see! how terrible it dawns,

And my Soul sickens with it.

1. Cst. How the God shakes him!

Tir. He comes! he comes! Victory! Conquest? Triumph!

But oh! Guiltless and Guilty. Murder! Patricide!

Incest; Discovery? Punishment — is ended,

And all your functions over.

Your Concourse with me now long I had,

But now I leave you, and your pride is past.

Tir. Myself vainly strive a while to stay you.

1. Cst. How a people, guilty how a people.

Cst. A Triumph.

Cst. A Triumph.

O E D I P U S .

A Trumpet within : Enter Hemon.

Hem. Rouze up ye Thebans ; tune your *Io Peas*.
Your King returns ; the *Argians*, are o're come :
Their Warrlike Prince in single Combat taken,
And led in Bands by God-like *Oedipus*.

All. *Oedipus, Oedipus, Oedipus.*

Creon. Furies confound his Fortune ! [Aside. To them.
Haste, all haste ; And meet with Blessings our Victorious King ; Decree Processions, bid new Holy days ; Crown all the Statues of our Gods with Garlands ; And raise a Brazen Column, thus inscrib'd, To *Oedipus*, now twice a Conquerour, Deliverer of his *Thebes*. Trust me, I weep for joy to see this day.

Tir. Yes, Heav'n knows why thou weep'st — Go, Countrymen, And, as you us'd to supplicate your Gods — So meet your King, with Bayes, and Olive-Branches : Bow down, and touch his Knees, and beg from him An end of all your Woes, for only he Can give it you.

[Ex. Tiresias, the People following.]

Enter Oedipus in Triumph; Adrastus Prisoner; Dymas, Train.

Creon. All hail, great *Oedipus* ; Thou mighty Conquerour, hail ; welcome to *Thebes*, To thy own *Thebes* ; to all that's left of *Thebes* : For half thy Citizens are sweep'd away, And wanting to thy Triumphs : And we the happy remnant, only live To welcome thee, and dye.

Oedipus. Thus pleasure never comes sincere to man, But lent by Heaven upon hard Misery ; And while *Jove* holds me o'er the Bowl of Joy, E're it can reach our Lips it's daith with Gall, By some left-handed God. O mournful Triumph ! O Conquest gain'd abroad, and lost at home ! O *Argos* now rejoice, for *Thebes* lies low ; Thy slaughter'd Sons now smile, and think they won, When they can count more *Theban* Ghosts than theirs.

Adrastus. No ; *Argos* mourns with *Thebes* ; you temper'd so Your Courage while you fought, that Mercy leem'd The Manlier Virtue, and much more prevail'd : While *Argos* is a People, think your *Thebes*

Can

Can never want for Subjects: Every Nation
Will crowd to serve where Oedipus commands.

Creon to Ham. How mean it shews to fawn upon the Victor!

Ham. Had you beheld him fight, you had said otherwise:
Come, 'tis brave bearing in him, not to envy
Superior Virtue.

Oed. This indeed is Conquest,
To gain a Friend like you: Why were we Foes?

Adrast. 'Cause we were Kings, and each disdain'd an equal.
I fought to have it in my power to do
What thou hast done; and so to use my Conquest;
To shew thee, Honour was my only Motive,
Know this, that were My Army at thy Gates,
And Thebes thus waste, I would not take the Gift,
Which, like a Toy, dropt from the hands of Fortune,
Lay for the next chance-comer.

Oed. Embracing. No more Captive,
But Brother of the War: 'Tis much more pleasant,
And safer, trust me, thus to meet thy Love,
Than when hard Gantlets clinch'd our Warlike Hands,
And kept 'em from soft use.

Adr. My Conquerour.

Oed. My Friend! that other name keeps Enmity alive.
But longer to detain thee were a Crime;
To love, and to Enviedice, go free;
Such welcome as a ruin'd Town can give
Expect from me; the rest let her supply.

Adr. I go without a blush, though conquer'd twice,
By you and by my Princess.

Creon aside. Then I am Conquer'd thrice; by Oedipus,
And her, and ev'n by him, the Slave of both:
Gods, I'm beholding to you, for making me your Image,
Wou'd I cou'd make you mine! [Ex. Creon]

Enter the People with Branches in their hands, holding them
up, and kneeling. Two Priests before them.

Oedipus. Alas, my People! What means this speechless sorrow, down cast-eyes,
And lifted hands! If there be one among you
Whom grief has left a Tongue, speak for the rest.

1 Pr. O Father of thy Country!

To thee these knees are bent, these Eyes are lifted,
As to a visible Divinity.

A Prince on whom Heav'n safely might repose

O E D I P U S.

The business of Mankind : for Providence
Might on thy bosom sleep secure,
And leave her task to thee.

But where's the Glory of the former acts?
Ev'n that's destroy'd when none shall live to speak it.
Millions of Subjects shalt thou have ; but none
A people of the dead ; a crowded desert.

A Midnight silence at the noon of day.

Oed. O were our God as ready with their pity,

As I with mine, this presence shou'd be throng'd.
With all I left alive, and my sad eyes
Not search in vain for friends, whose promis'd light
Flatter'd my toyls of War.

I Pr. Twice our deliverer.

Oed. Nor are now your woes

Address to one who sleeps :
When this unwelcome news first reach'd my ears.

Dymas was sent to Delphi to enquire

The Cause and Cure of this contagious ill :
And is this day return'd, but since his message
Concerns the publick, I refus'd to hear it
But in this general Presence: let him speak.

Dymas. A dreadful answer from the hallow'd Urn,

And sacred tripod did the Priests give,
In these Mysterious words,

The Oracle. Shed in a cursed hour, by cursed hand,
Blood Royal unreveng'd, has cur'd the Land.
When Lajus death is expiated well
Your Plague shall cease : the rest let Lajus tell.

Oed. Dreadful indeed ! blood, and a Kings blood too :

And such a King, and by his Subjects shed !

(Else by this Curse on Thebes ?) no wonder then

If Monsters, Wars, and Plagues revenge such Crimes !

If Heav'n be just, its whole Artillery,

All must be empty'd on us. Not one bolt

Shall err from Thebes ; but more be call'd for, more !

New moulded thunder of a larger size ;

Driv'n by whole Jove. What, touch anointed Pow'r ?

Then Gods beware : Jove wou'd himself be ne'er

Cou'd you but reach him to.

2 Pr. We mourn the sad remembrance.

Oed. Well you may :

Worse than a Plague infects you : you're devoted

To Mother Earth, and to th' infernal Pow'r's :

As to a guilty Divinity, or to a Heaven, where no wrongs

Hell has a right in you: I thank you Gods,
 That I'm no *Theban* born: how my blood crudities!
 As if this curse touch'd me! and touch'd me nearer,
 Than all this presence! — Yes, 'tis a King's blood,
 And I, a King, am ty'd in deeper bonds
 To expiate this blood: but where, from whom,
 Or how must I atone it? tell me, *Thebans*,
 How *Loujus* fell? for a confus'd report
 Pass'd through my ears, when first I took the Crown:
 But full of hurry, like a morning dream,
 It vanish'd in the busyness of the day.

1. Pr. He went in private forth; but thinly follow'd;
 And ne're return'd to *Thebes*.

Oed. Nor any from him? came there no attendant?
 None to bring news?

2. Pr. But one; and he so wounded.
 He scarce drew breath to speck some few faint words.

Oed. What were they? something may be learnt from thence:

1. Pr. He said a Band of Robbers watch'd their passage;

Who took advantage of a narrow way

To murder *Loujus* and the rest: himself

Left too for dead.

Oed. Made you no more enquiry,

But took this bare relation?

2. Pr. 'Twas neglected:

For then the Monster *Sphynx* began to rage;

And present cares soon buried the remote:

So was it hush'd, and never since reviv'd.

Fed. Mark, *Thebans*, mark!

Just then, the *Sphynx* began to rage among you;

The Gods took hold ev'n of th' offending minute,

And dated thence your woes: Thenew will I trace 'em.

1. Pr. 'Tis just thou shou'dst!

Oed. Hear then this dread imprecation; hear it:

Tis lay'd on all; not any one exempt:

Bear witness heavy, avenge it on the perjur'd.

If any *Theban* born, if any stranger

Reveal this murder, or produce its Author,

Ten Antique Talents be his just reward:

But if for Fear, for Favour, or for Fire,

The murder he conceal, the Curse of *Thebes*

Fall heavy on his head: Unite our Plagues

Ye Gods, and place 'em there: from Fire and Water,

Converse, and all things common, be he banish'd.

But for the murderer's self, unfound by man,
Find him ye Pow'r's Celestial, and Infernal;
And the same Fate, or worse, than *Laius* meets.
Let be his lot: His Children be accurs'd,
His Wife and Kindred, all of his be curs'd.

Bor. Pr. Confirm it, Heav'n!

Enter Jocasta; Attended by Women.

Joc. At your Devotions! Heav'n success your wishes,
And bring th' effect of these your pious Pray'rs.
On you, and me, and all.

Pr. Avert this Omen, Heav'n!

Oed. O fatal found, Unfortunate *Jocasta*!
What hast thou said! an ill hour hast thou chosen,
For these fore-boding words! why, we were cursing!

Joc. Then may that Curse fall only where you laid it.

Oed. Speak no more!

For all thou say'st is ominous: we were cursing;
And that dire imprecation hast thou fasten'd
On Thebes, and thee and me, and all of us.

Joc. Are then my blessings turn'd into a Curse?
O unkind *Oedipus*. My former Lord,
Thought me his blessing: be thou like my *Laius*.

Oed. What yet again! the third time hast thou curs'd me?
This imprecation was for *Laius* death,
And thou hast wish'd me like him.

Joc. Horror seizes me!

Oed. Why dost thou gaze upon me? praythee Love,
Take off thy eye; it burdens me too much.

Joc. The more I look, the more I find of *Laius*:
His speech, his garb, his Action; nay his frown:
(for I have seen it;) but ne're bent on me.

Oed. Are we so like?

Joc. In all things but his Love.
Oed. I love thee more: so well I love, words cannot speak how well,
No pious Son e're lov'd his Mother more.

Than I my dear *Jocasta*.

Joc. I love you too.
The self same way: and when you child, methought

A Mothers love start up in your defence,
And bid me not be angry: be not you:

Foe I love *Laius* still as Wives shou'd love:
But you more tenderly, as part of me:

And when I have you in my arms, methinks
I lull my Child asleep.

Oed.

Oed. Then we are blest :
And all these Curles sweep along the Skyes
Like empty Clouds ; but drop not on our heads.

Joc. I have not joy'd an hour since you departed,
For publick Miseries, and for private fears ;
But this blest meeting has o're-pay'd 'em all.
Good Fortune that comes seldom comes more welcome,
All I can wish for now, is your consent
To make my Brother happy.

Oed. How, Jocasta ?

Joc. By marriage with his Niece, *Entydotis* !

Oed. Uncle and Niece ! they are too near, my Love,
'Tis too like Incest : 'tis offence to kind :
Had I not promis'd, were there no *Adrestus*,
No choice but *Creon* left her of Mankind,
They shou'd not marry, speak no more of it,
The thought disturbs me.

Joc. Heav'n can never blest
A Vow so broken, which I made to *Crowns*,
Remember he's my Brother.

Oed. That's the bar,
And she thy Daughter : Nature wou'd abhor
To be forc'd back again upon her self,
And like a whirl-pool swallow her own streams.

Joc. Be not displeas'd, I'll move the Suit no more.
Oed. No, do not, for, I know not why, it shakes me
When I but think on Incest, move we forward, I know not where,
To thank the Gods for my success, and pray
To wash the Guilt of Royal Blood away. *[Exeunt Omnes.]*

A C T II. SCENE I.

An open Gallery, A Roofed Bed Chamber being Impos'd behind.

The Time, Night. Thunder, &c.

Hæmon, Alcander, Pythagoras.

HAM. SURE 'tis the end of all things, *Fate has torn*
The lock of time off, and his head is now
The gaily Ball of round Eternity.
Call you these Peaks of Thunder, but the yawn
Of bellowing Clouds ? By Jove, they seem to me

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The World's last groans; and those with shades of gloom,

Are its last blaze! The Tapiss of the Girded Earth,

The Sun and Moon, run down like waxen Globes;

The shooting Stars end all in purple Globes;

And Chaos is at hand.

Pyr. 'Tis Midnight, yet there's not a *Zephyr* sleeps,

But such as ne're must wake. All crowd about

The Palace, and implore, as from a God,

Help of the King; who, from the Battlement,

By the red Lightning's glare, defcry'd a far

Atones the angry Powers.

Ham. Ha! Pyramon, look,

Behold, Alcander, from yon' West of Heav'n,

The perfect Figures of a Man and Woman;

A Scepter bright with Gear in each right-hand,

Their flowing Robes of dazzling purple made,

Distinctly yonder in that point they stand,

Just West: a bloody red stains all the place:

And see, their Faces are quite hid in Clouds.

Pyr. Clusters of Golden Stars hang o're their heads,

And seem so crowded, that they burst upon 'em:

All dart at once their baleful influence,

In leaking Fire.

Alc. Longbearded Comets stick,

Like flaming Porcupines, to their left sides,

As they would shoot their Quills into their hearts.

Ham. But see! the King, and Queen, and all the Court!

Did ever Dolor Night shew ough like this?

Thunders again. The Scene draws, and discovers the Prodigies,

Enter Oedipus, Jocasta, Eurydice, Adraustus, all coming

Oed. Answer, you Pow'r's Divine; spare all this noise,

This rack of Heaven; and speak your fatal pleasure,

Why breaks yon dark and dusky Orb away?

Why from the bleeding Womb of monstrous Night,

Burst forth such Miriads of abortive Stars?

Ha! my Jocasta, look! the silver Moon?

A setting Crimson stains her Beantuous Face?

She's all o're blood? and loo! the northern Star,

What mean the mystic Thunderings? the jumblation?

A vast Eclipse darkens the mounting Planets,

Sound there, sound all the instruments of war,

Clarions and Trumpets, Silver, Brass, and Iron,

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And beat a thousand Drums to help her Labour.

Adr. 'Tis vain; you let the Prophets come in, news adtoldw to
Let's gaze no more, the Gods are Innocent.

Oed. Forbear, rash man.—Once more I ask your pleasure! If that the glow-worm light of humane Reason,
Might dare to offer at immortal knowledge,
And cope with God, why all this frost of Nature?
Why do the Rocks split, and why rous the Seas?
Why these Portents in Heaven, and Plagues on Earth?
Why you? Gigantick Fomus, Ethereal Monstros?

Ales! is all this but to fright the Dwarfes,
Which your own hands have made, then be it so.
Or if the Fates resolve some Expiation
For murder'd *Laius*, Hear me, hear me, Gods!
Hear me thus prostrate, spurs this ev'ning Land,
Save innocent Thebes, stop the Tyrant Death,
Do this, and lo! I stand up an Oblation
To meet your swiftest and severest anger,
Shoot all at once, and strike me to the Center.

*The Cloud draws that veil'd the heads of the Figures in the Skip, and bears
em Crown'd, with the names of Oedipus and Jocasta written above in
great Characters of Gold.*

Adr. Either I dream, and all my cooler fancies
Are vanish'd with that Cloud, that bears away
Or, just above those two Majestic heads,
I see, I read distinctly in large Gold
Oedipus and Jocasta.

Adr. I read the name.
Adr. 'Tis wonderful, yet ought not man to wade
Too far in the vast deep of destiny.

Joc. My Lord, my Oedipus, why gaze you now,
When the whole Heav'n is clear, as if the Gods
Had some new Monsters made! will you not turn,
And bless your People, who devour each word
You breathe.

Oed. It shall be so.
Yes, I will dye, O Thebes, to save thee!

Draw from my Heart my Blood, with more content
Than e'er I wore thy Crown. Yet, O Jocasta!

By all the indearments of miraculous love,
By all our languishings, our fears in pleasure,
Which oft have made us wonder; wear I wear
On thy fair hand, upon thy Breast I wear
I cannot call to mind, from budding Childhood

To blooming Youth, a Crime which committed
for which the awful God would doom my death.

For, 'Tis not you, my Lord,
But ~~He~~ who murdered ~~Lord~~, frees the Land :
Were you, which is impossible, the man,
Perhaps my Poniard first should drink your blood,
But you are innocent, as you ~~speak~~,
From Crimes like those. This made me violent
To save your life, which you almost would lost ;
Nor can you comprehend, with deepest thought,
The horrid Agony you call me in,
When you resolv'd to die.

Qod. Is't possible?

*Joe. Alas! why start you so? Her thinning grief
Who saw her Children slaughter'd all at once,
Was dull to mine: Methinks I should have made
My bosom bare against the armed God,
To save my Oedipus!*

Oed. I pray, no more.
You've ille... me, my Lord.
O! pardon me, dear you...
Pardon a heart that sinks with Sufferings,
And can but vent it self in groans and murmurings;
Yet to restore my peace, I'll find him out,
Yes, yes, you Gods! you shall have ample vengeance
On Lajus murderer. O, the Taylors' shame!
I'll know't, I will: Are shall be Conjur'd for it,
And Nature all unravel'd.

Joc. Sacred SHRI of sun ion Tagoosay, Istrishow it!
Oed. Rage will have way, and 'tis but you, I'll fetch um,
The lodger in w^t upon a Dragon's Wing.
Tho' Rocks should dash him, they ne'er can be dragg'd
From Hell, if Charms can hurry him along:
His Ghost shall be, by farr the s^t power, His
(Tiresias, that rules all beneath the Moon)
Confin'd to flesh, to suffer Death once more;
And then be plung'd in his fiell fires again.

Crc. My Lord,
Tiresias attends your pleasure.

Oed. Haste and bring him in. O, my Joosta, Envoye Creem, and all ye Thowtfull men about

Of Plagues, of Madness, Murders, Prodigies,
Draws on : This Battel of the Heav'ns and Earth
Shall by his Wisdom be reduc'd to peace.

Enter Tiresias, leaning on a Staff, led by his Daughter Manto, followed by other Thebans.

O thou, whose most aspiring Mind
Know'st all the busines of the Courts above,
Open'st the Closets of the Gods, and dares
To mix with Jove himself and Fate at Council ;
O Prophet, answer me, declare aloud
The Traytor who conspir'd the death of *Laius*.
Or be they more, who from malignant Stars
Have drawn this Plague that blights unhappy *Thebes*.

Tir. We must no more than Fate commissions us
To tell ; yet something, and of moment, I'll unfold,
If that the God would wake ; I feel him now,
Like a strong Spirit charm'd into a Tree,
That leaps, and moves the Wood without a Wind :
The reu'z'd God, as all this while he lay
Intomb'd alive, starts and dilates himself :
He struggles, and he tears my aged Trunk
With holy Fury, my old Arteries burst,
My rive'l'd skin,
Like Parchment, crackles at the ballow'd fire ;
I shall be young again : *Manto*, my Daughter,
Thou hast a Voice that might have fav'd the Bard
Of *Thrace*, and forc'd the raging Bacchanals,
With lifted Prongs, to listen to thy airs :
O charm this God, this Fury in my bosom,
Lull him with tuneful notes, and artful strings,
With pow'rful strains ; *Manto*, my lovely Child,
Sooth the unruly God-head to be mild.

SONG to Apollo.

Phoebus, God belov'd by men ;
At thy dawn, every Beast is reu'z'd in his Den ;
At thy setting, all the Birds of thy absence complain,
And we dye, all dye till the morning comes again,
Phœbus, God belov'd by men !
Idol of the Eastern Kings,
Awful as the God who fings.

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*His Thunder round, and the Lightning wings ;
God of Songs, and Orphean strings,
Who to this mortal bosom brings,
All harmonious heavenly things !
Thy drouzie Prophet to revive,
Ten thousand thousand forms before him drive ;
With Chariots and Horses all o'fire awake him,
Convulsions, and Furies, and Prophesies shake him,
Let him tell it in groans, tho' he bend with the Load,
Tho' he burst with the weight of the terrible God.*

Tir. The wretch, who shed the blood of old *Lydacides*,

Lives, and is great ;
But cruel greatness ne're was long :
The first of *Laius* blood his life did seize,
And urg'd his Fate,

Which else had lasting been and strong.

The wretch, who *Laius* kill'd, must bleed, or fly ;
Or *Thebes*, consum'd with Plagues, in ruins lye.

Oed. The first of *Laius* blood ! prononnce the person ;
May the God roar from thy Prophetick mouth,
That even the dead may start up, to behold :
Name him, I say, that most accursed wretch,

For by the Stars he dies :

Speak, I command thee ;
By *Phæbus*, speak ! for sudden Death's his doom :
Here shall he fall, bleed on this very spot ;
His name, I charge thee once more, speak.

Tir. 'Tis lost,
Like what we think can never shun remembrance ;
Yet of a sudden's gone beyond the Clouds.

Oed. Fetch it from thence ; I'll have't, where e're it be.

Cre. Let me intreat you, sacred Sir, be calm,
And *Creon* shall point out the great Offender.

'Tis true, respect of Nature might injoin

My silence at another time ; but oh,
Much more the pow'r of my eternal Love !

That, that should strike me dumb : yet *Thebes*, my Country —
I'll break through all, to succour thee, poor City !

O, I must speak.

Oed. Speak then, if ought thou know'st :
As much thou seem'st to know, delay no longer.

Cre. O Beauty ! O illustrious Royal Maid ?
To whom my Vows were ever paid till now,

And with such modest, chaste, and pure affection.

The coldest Nymph might read 'em without blushing ;
 Art thou the Murdress then of wretched *Laius*?
 And I, must I accuse thee ! O my tears !
 Why will you fall in so abhorr'd a Cause ?
 But that thy beautious, barbarous, hand destroy'd
 Thy Father (O monstrous act !) both Gods
 And Men at once take notice.

Oed. Eurydice !

Eur. Traytor, go on ; I scorn thy little malice,
 And knowing more my perfect innocence,
 Than Gods and Men, then how much more than thee,
 Who art their opposite, and form'd a Liar,
 I thus disdain thee ! Thou once didst talk of Love ;
 Because I hate thy love,
 Thou dost accuse me.

Adr. Villain, inglorious Villain,
 And Traytor, double damn'd, who durst blaspheme
 The spotless Virtue of the brightest beauty ;
 Thou dy'st : nor shall the sacred Majesty, [Draws and wounds him.
 That guards this place, preserve thee from my rage.

Oed. Disarm 'em both : Prince I shall make you know
 That I can tame you twice. Guards, seize him.

Adr. Sir,
 I must acknowledge in another Cause
 Repentance might abash me ; but I glory
 In this, and smile to see the Traytor's Blood.

Oed. Creon, you shall be satisfy'd at full.
Cre. My hurt is nothing, Sir ; but I appeal
 To wise Tiresias, if my accusation
 Be not most true. The first of *Laius* blood
 Gave him his death. Is there a Prince before her ?
 Then she is faultless, and I ask her Pardon.
 And may this blood ne're cease to drop, O Thebes,
 If pity of thy sufferings did not move me
 To shew the Cure which Heaven it self prescrib'd.

Eur. Yes, Thebans, I will dye to save your lives,
 More willingly than you can wish my fate ;
 But let this good, this wise, this holy Man
 Pronounce my Sentence : for to fall by him,
 By the vile breath of that prodigious Villain,
 Would sink my Soul, tho' I should dye a Martyr.

Adr. Unhand me, slaves. O mightiest of Kings,
 See, at your feet a Prince not us'd to kneel ;
 Touch not *Eurydice*, by all the Gods,
 As you would save your Thebes, but take my life :

For, should she perish, Heav'n would heap Plagues on Plagues,
 Rain Sulphur down, hurle kindled bolts
 Upon your guilty heads.

Cre. You turn to Gallantry, what is but justice.
 Proof will be easie made. *Adrastus* was
 The Robber who bereft th' unhappy King
 Of life; because he flatly had deny'd
 To make so poor a Prince his Son-in-law:
 Therefore 'twere fit that both should perish.

1 Theb. Both, let both dye.

All Theb. Both, both; let 'em dye.

Oed. Hence you wild herd! For your King-leader here,
 He shall be made Example. *Hamon*, take him.

1 Theb. Mercy, O mercy.

Oed. Mutiny in my presence!

Hence, let me see that busie face no more.

Tir. *Theban*, what madness make you drunk with rage?
 Enough of guilty death's already acted:

Fierce *Creon* has accus'd *Eurydice*,
 With Prince *Adrastus*; which the God reproves
 By inward Checks, and leaves their fates in doubt.

Oed. Therefore instruct us what remains to do,
 Or suffer; for I feel a sleep like death
 Upon me, and I sigh to be at rest.

Tir. Since that the Pow'rs Divine refuse to clear
 The mystic deed, I'll to the Grove of Furies;
 There I can force th' Infernal Gods to shew

Their horrid Forms;

Each trembling Ghost shall rise,

And leave their grizly King without a waite:

For Prince *Adrastus* and *Eurydice*,

My life's engag'd, I'll guard 'em in the Fane,

Till the dark Mysteries of Hell are done.

Follow me, Princes; *Theban*, all to rest.

O, *Oedipus*, to morrow — but no more,

If that thy wakeful Genius will permit,

Indulge thy Brain this night with softer flumbers:

To morrow, O to morrow! — sleep, my Son;

And in prophetick dreams thy Fate be shown.

[Ex. *Tires. Adrast. Euryd. Manto. Theban.*

Manent *Oed.* *Joe.* *Creon.* *Pyras.* *Ham.* *Arcan.*

Oed. To bed, my Fair, my Dear, my best *Jocasta*,
 After the toils of War, 'tis wondrous strange

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Our loves should thus be dash'd. One moments thought,
And I'll approach the arms of my belov'd.

Pyr. Consume whole years in care, so now and then
I may have leave to feed my famish'd eyes
With one short passing glance, and figh my Vows:
This, and no more, my Lord, is all the passion
Of Languishing *Jocasta*.

Oed. Thou softest, sweetest of the World! good night.
Nay, she is beauteous too, yet, mighty Lovel
I never offer'd to obey thy Laws,
But an unusual chillness came upon me;
An unknown hand still check'd my forward joy,
Dash'd me with blus'hes, tho' no light was near;
That ev'n the act became a violation.

Pyr. He's strangely thoughtful.

Oed. Hark! who was that? Ha! *Creon*, didst thou call me?

Creon. Not I, my gracious Lord, nor any here.

Oed. That's strange! methought I heard a doleful voice

Cry'd *Oedipus*.—The Prophet bad me sleep;
He talk'd of Dreams and Visions, and to morrow!
I'll muse no more on't, come what will or can,
My thoughts are clearer than unclouded Stars;
And with those thoughts I'll rest: *Creon*, good night. [*Ex.* with *Hæmon*.

Cre. Sleep seal your eyes, Sir, Eternal sleep.

But if he must sleep and wake again, O all
Tormenting Dreams, wild horrors of the night,
And Hags of Fancy wing him through the air:
From precipices hurl him headlong down;
Charybdis roar, and death be set before him.

Alc. Your Curses have already ta'ne effect;
For he looks very sad.

Cre. May he be rooted, where he stands, for ever;
His eye-balls never move, brows be unabent,
His blood, his Entrails, Liver, Heart and Bowels,
Be blacker than the place I wish him, Hell.

Pyr. No more; you tear your self, but vex not him.
Methinks 'twere brave this night to force the Temple,
While blind *Tiresias* conjures up the Fiends,
And pass the time with nice *Eurydice*.

Alc. Try promises, and threats, and if all fail,
Since Hell's broke loose, why should not you be mad?
Ravish, and leave her dead, with her *Adrestus*.

Cre. Were the Globe mine, I'd give a Province hourly
For such another thought: Lust, and Revenge!
To stab at once the only Man I hate,

[*Exit.*

And

O E D I P U S .

And to enjoy the Woman whom I love !
 I ask no more of my auspicious Stars,
 The rest as Fortune please ; so but this night
 She play me fair, why let her turn for ever.

Enter Hamon.

Ham. My Lord, the troubled King is gone to rest ;
 Yet, e're he sleeps, commanded me to clear
 The Antichambers : none must dare be near him.

Creon. Hamon, you do your duty ; ————— [Thunder.
 And we obey. — The night grows yet more dreadful !
 'Tis just that all retire to their devotions ;
 The Gods are angry : but to morrow's dawn,
 If Prophets do not lie, will make all clear.

[As they go off,

Oedipus Enters, walking asleep in his shirt, with a Dagger in his right hand, and a Taper in his left.

Oed. O, my Jocasta ! 'tis for this the wet
 Starv'd Soldier lies all night on the cold ground ;
 For this he bears the storms
 Of Winter Camps, and freezes in his Arms :
 To be thus circled, to be thus embrac'd ;
 That I could hold thee ever ! ————— Ha ! where art thou ?
 What means this melancholly light, that seems
 The gloom of glowing embers ?
 The Curtain's drawn ; and see she's here again !
 Jocasta ? Ha ! what, fall'n asleep so soon ?
 How fares my Love ? this Taper will inform me.
 Ha ! Lightning blast me, Thunder,
 Rivet me ever to *Prometheus* Rock,
 And Vultures gnaw out my incestuous heart,
 By all the Gods ! my Mother *Merope* !
 My Sword, a Dagger ; Ha, who waits there ? slaves,
 My Sword : what, Hamon, dar'st thou, Villain, stop me !
 With thy own Poniard perish. Ha ! who's this ?
 Or is't a change of Death ? by all my Honours,
 New murder ; thou hast slain old *Polybus* :
 Incest and Parricide, thy Father's murderer !
 Out thou infernal flame : now all is dark,
 All blind and dismal, most triumphant mischief !
 And now while thus I walk about the room,
 I challenge Fate to find another wretch
 Like Oedipus !

[Thunder, &c.
Enter

Enter Jocasta attended with Lights, in a Night-Gown.

Oed. Night, Horror, Death, Confusion, Hell and Furies !
 Where am I ? O, Jocasta, let me hold thee,
 Thus to my bosom, ages ; let me grasp thee :
 All that the hardest temper'd weather'd flesh,
 With fiercest humane Spirit inspir'd can dare
 Or do, I dare ; but, oh you Pow'rs, this was
 By infinite degrees too much for Man.
 Methinks my deaf'd ears
 Are burst ; my eyes, as if they had been knock'd
 By some tempestuous hand, shoot flashing fire :
 That sleep should do this !

Joc. Then my fears were true.
 Methought I heard your voice, and yet I doubted,
 Now roaring like the Ocean, when the winds
 Fight with the waves, now in a still small tone
 Your dying accents fell, as racking ships,
 After the dreadful yell, sink murmuring down,
 And bubble up a noise.

Oed. Trust me, thou Fairest, best of all thy Kind,
 None e're in Dreams was tortur'd so before,
 Yet what most shocks the nice ness of my temper,
 Ev'n far beyond the killing of my Father,
 And my own death, is, that this horrid sleep
 Dash'd my sick fancy with an act of incest :
 I dreamt, Jocasta, that thou wert my Mother,
 Which, tho' impossible, so damps my Spirits,
 That I cou'd do a mischief on my self,
 Lest I should sleep and Dream the like again :

Joc. O, Oedipus, too well I understand you !
 I know the wrath of Heav'n, the care of Thebes,
 The cries of its Inhabitants, War's toils,
 And thousand other labours of the State,
 Are all referr'd to you, and ought to take you
 For ever from Jocasta.

Oed. Life of my life, and treasure of my Soul,
 Heav'n knows I love thee.

Joc. O, you think me vile,
 And of an inclination so ignoble,
 That I must hide me from your Eyes for ever.
 Be witness, Gods, and strike Jocasta dead,
 If an immodest thought, or low desire
 Inflam'd my breast, since first our Loves were lighted.

Oed. O rise, and add not, by thy cruel kindness,
 A grief more sensible than all my torments.
 Thou think'st my dreams are forg'd; but by thy self,
 The greatest Oath, I swear, they are most true:
 But be they what they will, I here dismiss 'em;
 Be gone Chimeras, to your Mother Clouds,
 Is there a fault in us? Have we not search'd
 The Womb of Heav'n, examin'd all the Entrails
 Of Birds and Beasts, and sif'd the Prophet's Art?
 Yet what avails? he, and the Gods together,
 Seem like Physicians at a loss to help us:
 Therefore, like Wretches that have linger'd long,
 We'll snatch the strongest Cordial of our love;
 To bed, my Fair.

Ghost within. Oedipus!

Oed. Ha! who calls? Didst thou not hear a Voice?
 Joc. Alas! I did.
Ghost. Jocasta!
 Joc. O my Love, my Lord, support me!
 Oed. Call louder, till you burst your airy Forms:
 Rest on my hand. Thus arm'd with Innocence,
 I'll face these babbling Demons of the air.
 In spight of Ghosts, I'll on,
 Tho' round my Bed the Furies plant their Charms;
 I'll break 'em, with Jocasta in my arms:
 Clasp'd in the folds of love, I'll wait my doom;

And act my joys, tho' Thunder shake the room.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A dark Grov.

Enter Creon:

Cre. **T**IS better not to be, than to be unhappy.

Dio. What mean you by these words?

Cre. 'Tis better not to be, than to be *Creon*.
 A thinking soul is punishment enough;
 But when 'tis great, like mine, and wretched too,
 Then every thought draws blood.

Dio. You are not wretched.

Cre. I am: My Soul's ill-married to my Body.

I wou'd be young, be handsom, be belov'd :
Coud I but breath my self into *Adraſſus* —

Dio. You rave ; call home your thoughts.

Cre. I prithee let my Soul take air a while ;
Were she in *Oedipus*, I were a King,
Then I had kill'd a Monster, gain'd a Battel ;
And had my Rival Pris'ner, brave, brave actions :
Why have not I done these ?

Dio. Your fortune hinder'd.

Cre. There's it : I have a soul to do 'em all :
But fortune will have nothing done that's great,
But by young handsome Fools : Body and brawn
Do all her work : *Hercules* was a fool,
And straight grew famous : a mad boistrous fool,
Nay worse, a Womans fool.

Fool is the stuff, of which Heav'n makes a Hero.
Dio. A Serpent ne're becomes a flying Dragon,
Till he has eat a Serpent.

Cre. Goes it there !

I understand thee, I must kill *Adraſſus*.

Dio. Or not enjoy your Mistreis :

Eurydice and he are Pris'ners here,
But will not long be so : this tell-tale Ghost
Perhaps will clear 'em both.

Cre. Well : 'tis resolv'd.

Dio. The Princess walks this way ;
You must not meet her,
Till this be done.

Cre. I must.

Dio. She hates your sight :
And more since you accus'd her.

Cre. Urge it not.

I cannot stay to tell thee my Design ;
For she's too near.

Enter *Eurydice*.

How, Madam, were your thoughts employ'd ?

Eur. On death, and thee.

Cre. Then were they not well sorted : life and me
Had been the better match.

Eur. No, I was thinking

On two the most detested things in Nature :
And they are death and thee.

Cre. The thought of death to one near death is dreadful
 O 'tis a fearful thing to be no more,
 Or if to be, to wander after death,
 To walk, as Spirits do, in Brakes all day ;
 And when the darkness comes, to glide in paths
 That lead to graves : and in the silent Vault,
 Where Lyes your own Pale Illyrowd, to hover o're it,
 Striving to enter your forbidden Corps ;
 And often, often, vainly breathe your Ghoul
 Into your lifeless lips :
 Then, like a lone benighted Travellour
 Shut out from lodging, shall your groans be answer'd
 By whistling winds, whose every blast will shake
 Your tender Form to Atoms.

Eur. Must I be this thin Being ? and thus wander !
 No quiet after Death !

Cre. None : you must leave
 This beauteous body ; all this youth and freshness
 Must be no more the Object of desire,
 But a cold Lump of Clay ;
 Which then your discontented Ghost will leave,
 And loath its former lodging.
 This is the best of what comes after death,
 Ev'n to the best.

Eur. What then shall be thy Lot ?
 Eternal torments, Baths of boiling Sulphur ;
 Vicissitudes of Fires, and then of Frosts ;
 And an old Guardian Friend, ugly as thou art,
 To hallow in thy Ears at every lash ;
 This for *Eurydice* ; these for her *Adraustus*.

Cre. For her *Adraustus* !

Eur. Yes ; for her *Adraustus* :
 For death shall ne're divide us : death, what's Death !

Dio. You seem'd to fear it.

Eur. But I more fear *Ceon* :
 To take that hunch-back'd Monster in my arms ,
 Th' excrescence of a Man.

Dio. to *Cre.* See what you've gain'd.

Eur. Death only can be dreadful to the bad :
 To innocence, 'tis like a bug-bear dress'd
 To fright'n Children ; pull but off his Masque
 And he'll appear a Friend.

Cre. You talk too lightly
 Of Death and Hell. Let me inform you better.

Eur. You best can tell the news of your own Country.

Dio.

Dio. Nay, now you are too sharp.

Eur. Can I be so to one who has accus'd me
Of murder and of patricide?

Cre. You provok'd me:
And yet I only did thus far accuse you,
As next of blood to *Laius*: be advis'd,
And you may live.

Eur. The means?
Cre. 'Tis offer'd you.
The Foöl *Adrastus* has accus'd himself.

Eur. He has indeed, to take the guilt from me.
Cre. He says he loves you; if he does, 'tis well:
He ne're cou'd prove it in a better time.

Eur. Then death must be his recompence for love!
Cre. 'Tis a Fools just reward:

The wife can make a bettes use of life:
But 'tis the young man's pleasure; his ambition:
I grudge him not that favour.

Eur. When he's dead,
Where shall I find his equal?

Cre. Every where.
Fine empty things, like him,
The Court swarms with 'em.
Fine fighting things; in camps they are so common,
Crows feed on nothing else: plenty of Fools;
A glut of 'em in *Thebes*.
And fortune still takes care they shou'd be seen:
She places 'em aloft, o'th' topmost Spoke
Of all her Wheel: Fools are the daily work
Of Nature; her vocation: if she form
A man, she loses by't, 'tis too expensive;
'Twon'd make ten Fools; A man's a Prodigy.

Eur. That is a *Creon*: O thou black detractor,
Who spitt'st thy venom against Gods and Man!

Thou enemy of eyes:
Thou who lov'st nothing but what nothing loves;
And that's thy self: who hast conspir'd against
My life and fame, to make me loath'd by all;
And only fit for thee.

But for *Adrastus* death, good Gods, his death!
What Curse shall I invent?

Dio. No more; he's here.

Eur. He shall be ever here.

He who wou'd give his life; give up his fame. —————

Enter Adraſtus.

If all the Excellence of Woman-kind
Were mine; —— No, 'tis too little all for him:
Were I made up of endlesſ, endlesſ joyes ——

Adr. And ſo thou art:

The man who loves like me,
Wo'd think ev'n Infamy, the worst of Ills;
Were cheaply purchaſt, were thy love the price:
Uncrown'd, a Captive, nothing left, but Honour;
'Tis the laſt thing a Prince ſhou'd throw away,
But when the ſtorm grows loud, and threatens love,
Throw ev'n that over-board, for Love's the Jewel,
And laſt it muſt be kept.

Cre. to Dio. Work him be ſure
To rage, he's paſſionate;
Make him th' Aggressor.

Dio. O falſe love; falſe honour.

Cre. Diſſemblaſed both, and falſe!

Adr. Darſt thou ſay this to me?

Cre. To you; why what are you, that I ſhould ſcar you?
I am not *Laius*: Hear me, Prince of *Argos*,
You give what's nothing, when you give your honour;
'Tis gone; 'tis lost in battel. For your love,
Vows made in wine are not ſo falſe as that:
You kill'd her Father; you confeſt'd you did:
A mighty Argument to prove your paſſion to the Daughter.

Adraſtus. aside. Gods, muſt I bear this brand, and not reſore
The lye to his foul throat!

Dio. Basely, you kill'd him.

Adr. aside. O, I burn inward: my blood's all o'fire.
Alcides, when the poifon'd shirt ſate cloſeſt,
Had but an Ague fit to this my Feaver.
Yet, for *Eurydice*, ev'n this I'll ſuffer,
To free my love —— Well then, I kill'd him basely.

Cre. Fairly, I'm ſure you cou'd not.

Dio. Nor alone.

Cre. You had your fellow-Thieves about you, Prince;
They Conquer'd, and you kill'd.

Adr. aside. Down swelling heart!
'Tis for thy Princeſſ all. —— O my *Eurydice* — — — — — *Tober.*
Euryd. to him. Reproach not thus the weakneſs of my Sex,
As if I cou'd not bear a shameful dearth,
Rather than ſee you burden'd with a Crime.

Of which I know you free;

Cre. You do ill, Madam,

To let your head-long Love triumph o're Nature:

Dare you defend your Father's Murderer?

Eur. You know he kill'd him not.

Cre. Let him say so.

Dio. See he stands mute.

Cre. O pow'r of Conscience, even in wicked men!

It works, it stings, it will not let him utter

One syllable, one, no to clear himself

From the most base, detested, horrid act

That e're cou'd stain a Villain, not a Prince.

Adr. Ha! Villain.

Dio. Echo to him Groves: cry Villain.

Adr. Let me consider! did I Murther *Laius*,

Thus like a Villain?

Cre. Best revoke your words;

And say you kill'd him not.

Adr. Not like a Villain; prithee change me that

For any other Lye.

Dio. No, Villain, Villain.

Cre. You kill'd him not! proclaim your innocence,

Accuse the Princess: So I knew 'twould be.

Adr. I thank thee, thou instruct'ſt me:

No matter how I kill'd him.

Cre. Aside. Coold again:

Eur. Thou who usurp'ſt the sacred name of Conscience,

Did not thy own declare him innocent;

To me declare him so? The King shall know it.

Cre. You will not be believ'd, for I'll forswear it.

Eur. What's now thy Conscience?

Cre. 'Tis my Slave, my Drudge, my supple Glove;

My upper Garment, to put on, throw off,

As I think best: 'Tis my obedient Conscience.

Adr. Infamous wretch!

Cre. My Conscience shall not do me the ill office

To save a Rival's life; when thou art dead,

(As dead thou shalt be, or be yet more base

Than thou think'ſt me,

By forfeiting her life, to save thy own.—)

Know this, and let it grate thy very Soul,

She shall be mine: (be it, if Vows were binding;)

Mark me, the fruit of all thy faith and passion,

Ev'n of thy foolish death, shall all be mine.

Adr. Thine, say'ſt thou, Monster!

Shall my Love be thine?
 O, I can bear no more!
 Thy cunning Engines, have with labour rais'd
 My heavy anger, like a mighty weight,
 To fall and push thee dead.
 See here thy Nuptials; see, thou rash *Ixion*,
 Thy promis'd *Funo Vanilb'd* in a Cloud;
 And in her room avenging Thunder rows
 To blast thee thus. — Come both —

Cre. 'Tis what I wish'd!
 Now see whose Arm can launch the surer bolt,
 And who's the better Jove. —

Eur. Help; Murther, help!

[Draws.

[Both draw.

[Fight.

Enter Hæmon and Guards, run betwixt them, and beat down
 their Swords.

Ham. Hold; hold your impious hands; I think the Furies,
 To whom this Grove is hallow'd, have inspir'd you:
 Now, by my soul, the holiest earth of *Thebes*.
 You have prophan'd with War. Nor Tree, nor Plant
 Grows here, but what is fed with Magick Juice,
 All full of humane Souls; that cleave their barks
 To dance at Midnight by the Moon's pale beams:
 At least two hundred years these reverend Shades
 Have known no blood, but of black Sheep and Oxen,
 Shed by the Priests own hand to *Proserpine*.

Adr. Forgive a Stranger's ignorance: I knew not
 The honours of the place.

Ham. Thou, *Creon*, didst.
 Not *Oedipus*, were all his Foes here lodg'd,
 Durst violate the Religion of these Groves,
 To touch one single hair: but must, unarm'd,
 Parle, as in Truce, or furlily avoid
 What most he long'd to kill.

Cre. I drew not first;
 But in my own defence.

Adr. I was provok'd,
 Beyond man's patience: all reproach cou'd urge
 Was us'd to kindle one not apt to bear.

Ham. 'Tis *Oedipus*, not I, must judge this Act:
 Lord *Creon*, you and *Diodes* retire:
Tyresias, and the Brother-hood of Priests,
 Approach the place: None at these Rites assist,
 But you th' accus'd, who by the mouth of *Laius*,

Must

Must be absolv'd or doom'd.

Adr. I bear my fortune.

Eur. And I provoke my tryal.

Hem. 'Tis at hand.

For see the Prophet comes with Vervain crown'd,
The Priests with Yeugh, a venerable band;
We leave you to the Gods.

[Ex. Hemon with Creon and Diocles.]

Enter Tiresias, led by Manto: The Priests follow; all cloathed in
long black Habits.

Tir. Approach, ye Lovers?

I'll-fated Pair! whom seeing not, I know:
This day your kindly Stars in Heav'n were joyn'd:
When lo, an envious Planet interpos'd,
And threaten'd both with death: I fear, I fear.

Eur. Is there no God so much a friend to love,
Who can controle the malice of our fate?
Are they all deaf? or have the Gyants Heav'n?

Tir. The Gods are just—
But how can Finite measure Infinite?
Reason! alas, it does not know it self!
Yet man, vain man, wou'd with this short-lin'd Plummet,
Fathom the vast Abyss of Heav'nly Justice.
What ever is, is in its Causes just;
Since all things are by Fate. But pur-blind man
Sees but a part o'th' Chain; the nearest links;
His eyes not carrying to that equal Beam
That poizes all above.

Eur. Then we must dye!

Tir. The danger's eminent this day.

Adr. Why then there's one day less for humane ills:
And who wou'd moan himself, for suffering that,
Which in a day must pass? something, or nothing—
I shall be what I was again, before
I was *Adrastus*;—

Penurious Heav'n canst thou not add a night
To our one day; give me a night with her,
And I'll give all the rest.

Tir. She broke her Vow
First made to *Creon*. But the time call's on:
And *Laius*' death must now be made more plain.
How loth I am to have recourse to Rites
So full of horrour, that I once rejoyce.

I want the use of Sight —

1 Pr. The Ceremonies lay.

Tir. Chuse the darkest part o' th' Grove,
Such as Ghosts at noon-day loye.
Dig a Trench, and dig it nigh
Where the bones of *Lajas* lye.
Altars rais'd of Turf or Stone,
Will th' Infernal Pow'rs have none.
Answer me if this be done?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Is the Sacrifice made fit?
Draw her backward to the pit:
Draw the barren Heyfer back,
Barren let her be and black.
Cut the curled hair that grows
Full betwixt her horns and brows:
And turn your faces from the Sun:
Answer me, if this be done?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Pour in blood, and blood like wine,
To Mother Earth and *Proserpine*;
Mingle Milk into the stream;
Feast the Ghosts that love the steam;
Snatch a brand from Funeral pile;
Toss it in to make 'em boil,
And turn your faces from the Sun;
Answer me, if all be done?

All Pr. All is done.

[*Peal of Thunder;* and *flashes of Lightning;*
then groans below the Stage.

Mano. O what Laments are those?

Tir. The groans of Ghosts, that cleave the Earth with pain:
And heave it up: they pant and stick half way.

[*The Stage wholly darkn'd.*

Mano. And now a sudden darkness covers all,
True genuine Night: Night added to the Groves;
The Fogs are blown full in the Face of Heaven.

Tir. Am I but half obey'd: Infernal Gods,
Must you have Musick too? then tune your voices,
And let 'em have such sounds as Hell ne're heard
Since *Orpheus* brib'd the Shades.

Musick first. Then Sing.

3. Hear, ye fallen Pow'rs below;
Hear, ye taskers of the dead.

{*This to be set
through.*

2. You

O E D I P U S.

35

2. You that boiling Cauldrons blow,
 You that strew the maben Land.
3. You that peck with Red-hot Tongz;
1. You that drive the trembling hosts
 Of poor, poor Ghosts,
 With your Sharpen'd Prongz;
2. You that thrust 'em off the Brim.
3. You that plunges 'em when they swim:
1. Till they drown;
 Till they go
 On a row

Down, down, down,
Ten thousand thousand, thousand fathoms low.

Chorus. Till they drown, &c.

1. Musick for a while
 Shall your cares beguile:
 Wondring how your pains were eas'd.
2. And disdaining to be plac'd;
3. Till Alecto free the dead

From their eternal bands;
Till the Snakes drop from her head.
And whip from out her bands.

1. Come away
 Do not stay,
 But obey
 While we play,
 For Hell's broke up, and Ghosts have holy-day.

Chorus. Come away, &c.

[A flash of Lightning: the Stage is made bright;
and the Ghosts are seen passing betwixt the Trees.

1. Lajus! 2 Lajus! 3 Lajus!
1. Hear! 2 Hear! 3 Hear!

Tir. Hear and appear:

By the Fates that spun thy thread;

Cho. Which are three,

Tir. By the Pixies fierce, and dread!

Cho. Which are three,

Tir. By the Judges of the dead!

Cho. Which are three,

Three times three!

Tir. By Hell's blew flame:

By the Stygian Lake:

And by Demogorgon's name

At which Ghosts quake,

Hear and appear.

[The

[*The Ghost of Laius rises arm'd in his Chariot, as he was slain. And behind his Chariot for the three who were Murder'd with him.*

Ghost of Laius. Why hast thou drawn me from my pains below,
To suffer worse above : to see the day,
And *Thebes* more hated ? Hell is Heav'n to *Thebes*,
For pity send me back, where I may hide,
In willing night, this ignominious head :
In Hell I shun the publick scorn ; and then
They hunt me for their sport, and hoot me as I fly :
Behold ev'n now they grin at my gor'd side,
And chatter at my wounds.

Tir. I pity thee :
Tell but why *Thebes* is for thy death accurst,
And I'll unbind the Charm.

Ghost. O spare my shame.

Tir. Are these two innocent ?

Ghost. Of my death they are.
But he who holds my Crown, Oh, must I speak !
Was doom'd to do what Nature most abhors,
The Gods foresaw it ; and forbud his being,
Before he yet was born. I broke their Laws,
And cloath'd with flesh his pre-existing Soul,
Some kinder Pow'r, too weak for destiny,
Took pity, and indu'd his new-form'd Mals
With Temperance, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude,
And every Kingly virtue ; but in vain.

For Fate, that sent him hood-winkt to the World,
Perform'd its work by his mistaking hands.
Asks thou who murder'd me ? 'twas *Oedipus*.
Who stains my Bed with Incest ? *Oedipus* :
For whom then are you curst, but *Oedipus* !
He comes, the Parricide : I cannot bear him :
My wounds ake at him : Oh his Murd'rous breath
Venoms my airy substance ! hence with him,
Banish him ; sweep him out ; the Plague he bears
Will blast your fields, and mark his way with ruine.
From *Thebes*, my Throne, my Bed, let him be driven ;
Do you forbid him Earth, and I'll forbid him Heaven.

[*Ghost descends.*

Enter *Oedipus*, *Creon*, *Hamon*, &c.

Oed. What's this ! methought some pestilential blast
Strook me just entring ; and some unclean hand
Struggled to push me backward : tell me why
My hair stands bristling up, why my flesh trembles !

WOM

You stare at me! then Hell has been among ye,
And some lag Fiend yet lingers in the Grove.

Tir. What Omen saw'st thou entring?

Oed. A young Stork,
That bore his aged Parent on his back,
Till weary with the weight, he shook him off,
And peck'd out both his Eyes.

Adr. Oh, *Oedipus!*

Eur. Oh! wretched *Oedipus!*

Tir. O! Fatal King!

Oed. What mean these Exclamations on my Name?
I thank the Gods, no secret thoughts reproach me:
No: I dare challenge Heav'n to turn me outward,
And shake my Soul quite empty in your sight,
Then wonder not that I can bear unmov'd
These fix'd regards, and silent threats of eyes:
A generous fierceness dwells with innocence;
And conscious vertue is allow'd some pride.

Tir. Thou know'st not what thou say'st.

Oed. What mutters he! tell me, *Eurydice*:

Thou shak'st: thy Soul's a Woman. Speak, *Adrastus*;
And boldly, as thou met'st my Arms in fight;
Dar'st thou not speak, why then 'tis bad indeed:
Tiresias, thee I summon by thy Priest-hood,
Tell me what news from Hell; where *Lajus* points,
And who's the guilty head?

Tir. Let me not answer.

Oed. Be dumb then, and betray thy Native soil
To farther Plagues.

Tir. I dare not name him to thee.

Oed. Dar'st thou converse with Hell, and canst thou fear
An humane name?

Tir. Urge me no more to tell a thing, which known
Wou'd make thee more unhappy: 'twill be found
Tho I am silent.

Oed. Old and obstinate! Then thou thy self
Art Author or Accomplice of this Murther,
And shun'st the Justice, which by publick ban
Thou hast incur'd.

Tir. O, if the guilt were mine
It were not half so great: know, wretched man,
Thou only, thou art guilty; thy own Curse
Falls heavy on thy self.

Oed. Speak this again:
But speak it to the Winds when they are loudest:

Or to the raging Seas, they'll hear as soon,
And sooner will believe.

Tir. Then hear me Heav'n,
For blushing thou hast seen it: hear me Earth,
Whose hollow womb cou'd not contain this murder,
But sent it back to light; and thou Hell, hear me,
Whose own black Seal has firm'd this horrid truth,
Oedipus murther'd Laius.

Oed. Rot the tongue,
And blasted be the mouth that spoke that Lye.
Thou blind of Sight, but thou more blind of Soul.

Tir. Thy Parents thought not so.

Oed. Who were my Parents?

Tir. Thou shalt know too soon.

Oed. Why seek I truth from thee?
The smiles of Courtiers, and the Harlots tears,
The Tradesmens oaths, and mourning of an Heir,
Are Truths to what Priests tell.
O why has Priest-hood priviledge to lye,
And yet to be believ'd! — thy age proefch'st that: —

Tir. Thou canst not kill me; 'tis not in thy Fate,
As 'twas to kill thy Father; wed thy Mother;
And beget Sons, thy Brethren.

Oed. Riddles, Riddles!

Tir. Thou art thy self a Riddle; a perplex'd
Obscure Enigma, which when thou unty'st,
Thou shalt be found and lost.

Oed. Impossible!

Adrastus. speak, and as thou art a King,
Whose Royal word is sacred, clear my Faile.

Adr. Wan'd I could!

Oed. Ha, wilt thou not: can that Plebeian Vice
Of lying mount to Kings! can they be tainted!
Then Truth is lost on Earth.

Cre. The Cheat's too gross:

Adrastus is his Oracle, and he,
The pious Jugler, but *Adrastus* Organ.

Oed. 'Tis plain, the Priest is unborend to free the Prisoner.

Cre. And turn the guilt on you.

Oed. O, honest Creon, how hast thou been bely'd! —

Eur. Hear me.

Cre. She's brib'd to save her Lover's life.

Adr. If *Oedipus* thou think'st —

Cre. Hear him not speak.

Adr. Then hear that holy man.

O E D I P O S.

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Crr. Priests, Priests, all heib'd, all Priests,

Oed. Adrestus I have found thee.

The malice of a vanquish'd man has leiz'd thee.

Adv. If Envy and not Truth ——

Oed. I'll hear no more: away with him.

[Hemon takes him off by force; Creon and Eurydice follow.

To Tir. Why stand'st thou here, Impostor!

So old, and yet so wicked. —— lye for gain;

And gain so short as age can promise thee!

Tir. So short a time as I have yet to live

Exceeds thy pointed hour; Remember Laius:

No more; if e're we meet again, 'twill be

In mutual darknes; we shall feel before us

To reach each others hand; Remember Laius.

[Ex. Tiresias: Priests follow.

Oedipus Solus.

Remember Laius! that's the burthen still.
Murther, and Incest! but to hear 'em nam'd
My Soul starts in me: the good Sentinel
Stands to her Weapons, takes the first Alarm
To guard me from such Crimes. —— Did I kill Laius?
Then I walk'd sleeping, in some frightful dream,
My Soul then stole my Body out by night,
And brought me back to Bed e're Morning-wake.
It cannot be ev'n this remotest way,
But some dark hint would jutte forward now;
And goad my memory. —— Oh my Treas!

Enter Jocasta.

Joc. Why are you thus dislumb'd?

Oed. Why, wouldst thou think it?

No less than Murder?

Joc. Murder! what of Murder?

Oed. Is Murther then no more? add Parricide,
And Incest; bear not these a frightful sound!

Joc. Alas!

Oed. How poor a pity is Alas,
For two such Crimes! —— was Laius us'd to lye?

Joc. Oh no: the most sincere, plain, honest man,

One who abhorr'd a lye?

Oed. Then he has got that Quality in Hell.
He charges me —— but why accuse I him?

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I did not hear him speak it; they accuse me,
The Priest, Adrastus, and Eurydice,
Of Murdering Laius. Tell me, while I think on't,
Has old Tiresias practis'd long this Trade?

Joc. What Trade?

Oed. Why this foretelling Trade.

Joc. For many years.

Oed. Has he before this day accus'd me?

Joc. Never.

Oed. Have you e're this inquir'd, who did this Murder?

Joc. Often; but still in vain.

Oed. I am satisfy'd.
Then 'tis an infant lye; but one day old I saw
The Oracle takes place before the Priest;
The blood of Laius was to Murder Laius:
I'm not of Laius's blood.

Joc. Ev'n Oracles

Are always doubtful, and are often forg'd:

Laius had one, which never was fulfill'd,
Nor ever can be now!

Oed. And what foretold it? Penitent boog art thou in this case?

Joc. That he shou'd have a Son by me, fore-doom'd
The Murderer of his Father: true indeed,
A Son was born; but, to prevent that Crime,
The wretched Infant of a guilty Fate,
Boar'd through his untry'd feet, and bound with cords,
On a bleak Mountain, naked was expos'd;
The King himself liv'd many, many years,
And found a different Fate, by Robbers Murder'd,
Where three ways meet: yet these are Oracles;
And this the Faith we owe 'em.

Oed. Say'lt thou, Woman?

By Heav'n thou hast awakn'd somewhat in me,
That shakes my very Soul!

Joc. What, new disturbance!

Oed. Methought thou said'lt, — (or do I dream thou said'lt it?)
This Murder was on Laius person done,
Where three ways meet!

Joc. So common fame reports.

Oed. Wou'd it had ly'd.

Joc. Why, good my Lord?

Oed. No questions;

'Tis busie time with me; dispatch mine first;
Say where, where was it done? O me, if I told you! —

Joc. Mean you the Murden? I shew you now —

Oed.

Oed. Coud'st thou not answ'rt without naming Murder?

Joc. They say in Phocidae, on the Verga that parts it,

From Dania, and from Delbos.

Oed. So! — How long! when happen'd this?

Joc. Some little time before you came to Thebes,

Oed. What will the Gods do with me!

Joc. What means that thought?

Oed. Something; but 'tis not yet your turn to ask.

How old was Laius, what his shape, his stature,

His action, and his meen? quick, quick, your answer.

Joc. Big made he was, and tall: his port was heree,

Erect his countenance: Manly Majesty,

Sate in his front, and darted from his eyes,

Commanding all he viewed: his hair just grizled,

As in a green old age: bate but his years,

You are his Picture.

Oed. aside. Pray Heav'n he drew me hot? am I his Picture?

Joc. So I have often told you.

Oed. True, you have;

Add that to the rest: how was the King?

Attended when he travell'd?

Joc. By four Servants:

He went out privately.

Oed. Well counted still:

One scap'd I hear; what since became of him?

Joc. When he beheld you first, as King in Thebes,

He kneel'd, and trembling, beg'd I wou'd dismiss him;

He had my leave; and now he lives retir'd,

Oed. This Man must be produc'd; he surely, for afaire,

Joc. He shall — yet have I leave to ask you why?

Oed. Yes, you shall know: for where should I repose?

The Anguish of my Soul, but in your breast;

I need not tell you Corinth claims my birthright;

My Parents Polybus and Merope,

Two Royal Names; their only Child am I.

It happen'd once; 'twas at a Bridal Feast,

One warm with Wine, told me I was a Foundling,

Not the King's Son; lifting with this reproach,

Strook him: my Father heard of it: the Man

Was made ask pardon; and the business hush'd.

Joc. 'Twas somewhat odd.

Oed. And strangely it perplext me.

I stole away to Delbos, and implo'red

The God, to tell my certain Parentage.

He bade me seek no farther: — 'twas my Fate

To

O E D I P U S .

To kill my Father, and pollute his Bed,
By marrying her who bore me.

Joc. Vain, vain Oracles!

Oed. But yet they frightened me ;
I lookt on Corinth as a place afar off,
Resolv'd my Destiny should wait in vain,
And never catch me there.

Joc. Too nice a fear !

Oed. Suspend your thoughts ; and flatter not too soon.
Just in the place you named, where three ways meet,
And near that time, five persons I encounter'd ;
One was too like, (Heav'n grant it prove not him)
Whom you describe for Laius, insolent
And fierce they were, as Men who liv'd on spoil.
I judg'd 'em Robbers, and by force repelld
The force they us'd : In short, four men I slew :
The fifth upon his knees demanding Life,
My mercy gave it — bring me comfort now,
If I slew Laius, what can be more wretched !
From Thebes and you my Curse has banish'd me :
From Corinth Fate.

Joc. Perplex not thus your mind ;
My husband fell by Multitudes opprest,
So Phorbas said : this Band you chanc'd to meet,
And murder'd not my Laius, but reveng'd him.

Oed. There's all my hope : Let Phorbas tell me this,
And I shall live again !
To you, good Gods, I make my last appeal ;
Or clear my Virtues or my Crime reveal :
If wandring in the maze of Fate I run,
And backward track the paths I ought to shun,
Impute my Errors to your own Decree ;
My hands are guilty, but my heart is free.

[Ex. Ambo.]

A C T I V . S C E N E I .

Pyracmon, Creon.

Pyr. S O M E business of import that Triumph wears
You seem to go with ; nor is it hard to guess
When you are pleas'd, by a malicious joy :

Who's

Whose Red and Fiery Beams cast through your Visage
A glowing pleasure. Sure you smile revenge,
And I cou'd gladly hear.

Cre. Wouldst thou believe, This giddy hair-brain'd King, whom old *Tiresias*,
Has Thunder-strook, with heavy accusation,
Tho' conscious of no inward guilt, yet fears;
He fears *Jocasta*, fears himself, his shadow;
He fears the multitude, and, which is worth
An Age of laughter, out of all Mankind,
He chuses me to be his Oracle;
Swears that *Adrastus*, and the lean-look'd Prophet,
Are joint-conspirators; and wisht me to Appase the raving *Thebans*, which I swore
To do.

Pyr. A dangerous undertaking;
Directly opposite to your own interest.
Cre. No, dull Pyramus, when I left his presence,
With all the Wings with which revenge could stop
My flight, I gain'd the mid'st o'th' City;
There, standing on a Pile of dead and dying,
I to the mad and sickly multitude,
With interrupting sobs, cry'd out, O *Thebes*,
O wretched *Thebes*, thy King, thy *Oedipus*,
This barbarous stranger, this Usurper, Monster,
Is by the Oracle, the wife *Tiresias*,
Proclaim'd the murderer of the Royal *Laius*:
Jocasta too, no longer now my Sister,
Is found complotter in the horrid deed.
Here I renounce all tye of Blood and Nature,
For thee, O *Thebes*, dear *Thebes*, poor blessing *Thebes*!
And there I wept, and then the Rabble howl'd,
And roar'd, and with a thousand antick moths
Gabbled Revenge, Revenge was all the cry.

Pyr. This cannot fail; see you on the Throne;
And *Oedipus* cast out
Cre. Then straight came *Alcander*, with a wild and bellowing Crowd,
Whom when he had wrought, I whisper'd him to join,
And head the Forces while the best was in 'em:
So to the Palace I return'd, to meet
The King, and greet him with another story.
But see, he Enters.

Go to the next page, and read **Enter**

Enter Oedipus, Jocasta, attended.

Oed. Said you that Phorbas is return'd, and yet Intreats he may return, without being ask'd Of ought concerning what we have discovered?

Joc. He started when I told him your intent, Replying, what he knew of that affair Would give no satisfaction to the King; Then, falling on his knees, begg'd, as for life, To be dismiss'd from Court: He trembled too, As if Convulsive death had seiz'd upon him, his hands were cover'd And stammer'd in his abrupt Rapsy so wilfully, That, had he been the murderer of Liges, Guilt and distraction could not have shook him more.

Oed. By your description, sure as *Blisses and death* Lay waste our Thebes, some deplorable chance at night Begot those fears: *Minerva* ! my peace, Secure him, dear Jocasta, for my Genius shrinks at his name.

Joc. Rather let him go; my poor boding heart would have it be, Without a reason.

Oed. Hark, the Thebans come! Therefore retire: and, once more, if thou lov'st me, Let Phorbas be retain'd.

Joc. You shall, while I Have life, be still obey'd: In vain you sooth me with your soft indentments, And set the fairest countenance to view, Your gloomy eyes, my Lord, betray a despatch And inward languishing: that Oracle Eats like a subtle Worm its venomous way, o'er all thy bones, Preys on your heart, and robs the noble Care, How-e're the beauteous out-side shew's so lovely.

Oed. O, thou wilt kill me with thy Love's excess! All, all is well; retire, the Thebans come! *Enter Jocasta.*

Ghost. Oedipus!

Oed. Ha! again that forebodings woe! Thrice have I heard, thrice since the morning dawn'd, It hollow'd loud, as if my Guardian Spirit Call'd from some vaulted Mantle, Or is it but the work of melancholly? When the Sun sets, shadows, that flew'd at Noon But small, appear most long and terrible;

So when we think Fate hovers o're our heads,
Our apprehensions shoot beyond all bounds,
Owls, Ravens, Crickets fear the watch of death,
Nature's worst Vermin scare her God-like Sons.
Ecchoes, the very leavings of a Voice,
Grow babling Ghosts, and call us to our Graves;
Each Mole-hill thought swells to a huge *Olympus*,
While we fantastick dreamers heave and puff,
And sweat with an Imagination's weight;
As if, like *Atlas*, with those mortal Shoulders
We could sustain the burden of the World.

Crc. O, Sacred Sir, My Royal Lord——

Ord. What now?

Thou seem'st affrighted at some dreadful Action,
Thy breath comes short, thy darted eyes are fixt
On me for aid, as if thou wer'st purif'd:
I sent thee to the *Thebans*, speak thy wonder;
Fear not, this Palace is a Sanctuary,
The King himself's thy Guard.

Crc. For me, alas,
My life's not worth a thought, when weigh'd with yours!
But fly, my Lord, fly as your life is sacred,
Your Fate is precious to your faithful *Creon*,
Who therefore, on his knees, thus prostrate begs
You would remove from *Thebes* that vows your ruin.
When I but offer'd at your innocence,
They gather'd Stones, and menac'd me with death,
And drove me through the Streets with imprecations
Against your Sacred Person, and those Traitors
Which justify'd your Guilt: which curs'd *Tiresias*
Told, as from Heav'n, was cause of their destruction.

Ord. Rise, worthy *Creon*, haste and take our Guard,
Rank 'em in equal part upon the Square,
Then open every Gate of this our Palace,
And let the Torrent in. Hark, it comes! —
I hear 'em roar: begin and break down all
The dams that would oppole their furious passage.

[Ex. *Creon, with Guards.*

Enter *Adrastus*, his sword drawn.

Adr. Your City
Is all in Arms, all bent to your destruction;
I heard but now, where I was stote robbing,
A Thundring shout, which made my Javelins tingle,

G 2

Cry,

Cry, Fire the Palace; where's the Cruel King?
 Yet, by th' Infernal Gods, those awful Pow'rs
 That have accus'd you, which these Ears have heard,
 And these Eyes seen, I must believe you guiltless;
 For, since I knew the Royal *Oedipus*,
 I have observ'd in all his acts such truth
 And God-like clearness; that to the last gush
 Of Blood and Spirits, I'll defend his life.
 And here have Sworn to perish by his side.

Oed. Be witness, Gods, how near this touches me, [Embracing him]. Q. what recompence can glory make?

Aar. Defend your innocence, speak like your self,
 And awe the Rebels with your dauntless virtue.
 But hark! the storm comes nearer.

Oed. Let it come.
 The force of Majesty is never known.
 But in a general wrack: Then, then is seen
 The difference 'twixt a Threshold and a Throne.

Enter Creon, Pyramon, Alcander, Tiresias, Thebans,

Alt. Where, where's this cruel King? *Thebans*, behold
 There stands your Plague, the ruine, desolation
 Of this unhappy —— speak; shall I kill him?
 Or shall he be cast out to Banishment?

All Theb. To Banishment, away with him.
Oed. - Hence, you Barbarians, to your stolid distance;
 Fix to the Earth your sordid looks; for he
 Who stirs, dares more than mad-men, Fiends, or Furies:
 Who dares to face me, by the Gods, as well
 May brave the Majesty of thundering Jove.
 Did I for this relieve you when believ'd
 By this fierce Prince, when coop'd within your Walls,
 And to the very brink of Fate reduc'd;
 When lean-jaw'd Famine made more havock of you
 Than does the Plague? But I rejoice I know you,
 Know the base stuff that temper'd your vile Souls:
 The Gods be prais'd, I needed not your Empire,
 Born to a greater, nobler of my own;
 Nor shall the Scepter of the Earth now win me
 To rule such Brutes, so barbarous a People.

Aar. Methinks, my Lord, I see a sad repentance,
 A general consternation spread among 'em.
Oed. My Reign is at an end, yet are I finish'd.
 I'll do a Justice that becomes a Monarch,
 A Monarch, who i'th' midst of Swords and Javelins.

Dares.

Dares act as on his Throne encompass round
With Nations for his Guard. *Alexander*, you
Are nobly born, therefore shall lose your head.
Here, *Haemon*, take him: but for this, and this,
Let cords dispatch 'em. Hence, away with 'em.

[Seizes him.]

Tir. O sacred Prince, pardon distract'd *Thebes*,
Pardon her, if she acts by Heav'n's award;
If that th' Infernal Spirits have declar'd
The depth of Fate, and if our Oracles
May speak, O do not too severely deal,
But let thy wretched *Thebes* at least complain:
If thou art guilty, Heav'n will make it known;
If innocent, then let *Tiresias* dye.

Oed. I take thee at thy word. Run, haste, and save *Alexander*:
I swear the Prophet, or the King shall dye.
Be witness, all you *Thebans*, of my Oath.
And *Phorbas* be the Umpire.

Tir. I submit.

[Trumpets sound.]

Oed. What mean those Trumpets?*Ham.* From your Native Country.Enter *Haemon* with *Alexander*, &c.

Great Sir, the fam'd *Egeon* is arriv'd,
That renown'd Favourite of the King your Father:
He comes as an Ambassadour from *Corimb*,
And sue's for Audience.

Oed. Haste, *Haemon*, flye, and tell him that I burn
To embrace him.

Ham. The Queen, my Lord, at present holds him
In private Conference; but behold her here.

Enter *Jocasta*, *Eurydice*, &c.

Joc. Hail, happy *Oedipus*, happiest of Kings!
Henceforth be blest, blest as thou canst desire,
Sleep without fears the blackest nights away;
Let Furies haunt thy Palace, thou shal sleep
Secure, thy humbers shall be soft and gentle
As Infants dreams.

Oed. What does the Soul of all my joys intend?
And whither would this rapture?

Joc. O, I could raye,
Pull down those lying Fanes, and burn that Vault,

From

From whence resounded those false Oracles,
That robb'd my Love of rest : if we most peevy,
Rear in the streets bright Altars to the Gods,
Let Virgins hands adorn the Sacrifice ;
And not a gray-beard forging Priest come near,
To pry into the bowels of the Victim,
And with his doteage mad the gaping World.
But see, the Oracle that I will trust,
True as the Gods, and affable as Men.

Enter *Egeon, Knave.*

Oed. O, to my arms, welcome, my dear *Egeon* ;
Ten thousand welcomes. O, my Foster Father,
Welcome as mercy to a Man condemned !
Welcome to me,
As to a sinking Marriner,
The lucky Plank that bears him to the shore !
But speak, O tell me what so mighty joy
Is this thou bring'st, which so transports *Jocasta* ?

Joc. Peace, peace, *Egeon* ; let *Jocasta* tell him !
O that I could for ever Charm, as now,
My dearest *Oedipus* : Thy Royal Father,
Polybus, King of *Corinth*, is no more.

Oed. Ha ! can it be ? *Egeon*, answer me,
And speak in short, what my *Jocasta*'s transport
May over-do.

Ege. Since in few words, my Royal Lord, you ask.
To know the truth ; King *Polybus* is dead.

Oed. O all you Powers, is't possible ? what dead !
But that the Tempest of my joy may rise
By just degrees, and hit at last the Stars :
Say, how, how dy'd he ? Ha ! by Sword, by Fire,
Or Water ? by Assassines, or Poyson ? Speak :
Or did he languish under some disease ?

Ege. Of no distemper, of no blast he dy'd, but fell like Autumn-Fruit that mellow'd long ;
Ev'n wonder'd at, because he dropp'd no sooner.
Fate seem'd to wind him up for four score years ;
Yet freshly ran he on ten Winters more :
Till, like a Clock worn out with ebbing time,
The Wheels of weary life at last stood still.

Oed. O, let me press thee in my youthful arms,
And smother thy old age in my embracer,
Yes Sheban, yes *Jocasta*, yes *Astræus*,

Old

Old Polybus, the King my Father's dead.

Fires shall be kindled in the midst of Thebes;

I' th' midst of Tumults, Wars, and Pestilence,

I will rejoice for Polybus his death.

Know, be it known to the limits of the World:

Yet farther, let it pass you dazzling roof,

The mansion of the Gods, and strike 'em deaf

With everlasting peals of Thundring joy.

Tir. Fate! Nature! Fortune! what is all this World?

Oed. Now, Dotard; now, thou blind old wizard Prophet,

Where are your boding Ghofts, your Altars new,

Your Birds of knowledge, that in dusky Air,

Chatter Futurity; and where are now

Your Oracles, that call'd me Parricide?

Is he not dead? deep laid in's Monument?

And was not I in Thebes when Fate attack'd him?

Avang, begon, you Vizors of the Gods!

Were I as other Sons, now I should weep;

But as I am, I've reason to rejoice;

And will, tho' his cold shade should rise and blant me.

O, for this death, let Waters break their bounds,

Rocks, Valleys, Hills, with splitting Jo's ring:

Io, Jocasta, Io pean sing.

Tir. Who would not now conclude a happy end?

But all Fate's turns are swift and unexpected.

Age. Your Royal Mother Metope, as if

She had no Soul since you forsook the Land,

Waves all the neigb'ring Princes that adore her.

Oed. Waves all the Princes! poor heart! for what, O speak.

Age. She, that in full-blown flow'r of glorious beauty,

Grows cold, ev'n in the Summer of her Age;

And for your sake has Iworn to dye unmarry'd.

Oed. How! for my sake, dye, and not marry! O,

My fit returns.

Age. This Diamond with a thousand killis blent,

With thousand sighs and willies for your safety,

She charg'd me give you, with the general homage

Of our Corinthian Lords.

Oed. There's Magick in it, take it from my sight;

There's not a beam it darts, but carries Hell,

Hot flasing lust, and Necromantick Incest;

Take it from these sick eyes, Oh hide it from me,

No, my Jocasta, tho' Thebes call me out,

With

While *Merope's* alive, I'll ne're return!
O, rather let me walk round the wide World
A beggar, than accept a Diadem
On such abhor'd conditions.

Oed. You make, my Lord, your own unhappiness,
By these extravagant and needless fears.

Oed. Needless! O, all you Gods! by Heav'n I'd rather
Embrace my arms up to my very lshoulders
In the dear entrails of the best of Fathers,
Than offer at the execrable act.

Of damned incest: therefore no more of her.

Age. And why, O fatig'd Sir, if Subjects may
Presume to look into their Monarch's breast,
Why should the chaste and spotless *Merope*
Infuse such thoughts as I must blush to name?

Oed. Because the God of *Delphi* did forewarn me,
With thundring Oracles.

Age. May I intreat to know em?

Oed. Yes, my *Egeon*; but the sad remembrance
Quite blasts my Soul: see then the swelling Priest!
Methinks I have his Image now in view:
He mounts the *Tripos* in a minutes space,
His clouded head knocks at the Temple roof,
While from his mouth

These dismal words are heard:

"Fly, wretch, whom Fate has doom'd thy Father's blood to spill,
"And with preposterous Births thy Mother's Womb to fill."

Age. Is this the Cause.

Why you refuse the Diadem of *Corinth*?

Oed. The Cause! why, is it not a monstrous one?

Age. Great Sir, you may return, and tho' you should
Enjoy the Queen (which all the Gods forbid)
The act would prove no incest.

Oed. How, *Egeon*?

Tho' I enjoy'd my Mother, not incestuous!
Thou rav'st, and so do I, and thefe all catch
My madness; look, they're dead with deep distraction:
Not Incest! what, not Incest with my Mother?

Age. My Lord, Queen *Merope* is not your Mother.

Oed. Ha! did I hear thee right? not *Merope*?
My Mother!

Age. Nor was *Polybus* your Father.

Oed. Then all my days and nights must now be spent
In curious search, to find our these dark Parents
Who gave me to the World; speak then *Egeon*,
By all the Gods Celestial and Infernal,

By all the ties of Nature, blood and friendship,
Conceal not from this rack'd despairing King
A point or smallest grain of what thou know'st.
Speak then, O answer to my doubts directly.
If Royal Polybus was not my Father,
Why was I call'd his Son?

Ege. He, from my Arms,
Receiv'd you as the fairest Gift of Nature.
Not but you were adorn'd with all the Riches
That Empire could bestow in costly Mantles
Upon its Infant Heir.

Oed. But was I made the Heir of Corinth's Crown,
Because *Egeon*'s hand presented me?

Ege. By my advice,
Being past all hope of Children,
He took, embrac'd, and own'd you for his Son.
Oed. Perhaps I then am yours; instruct me, Sir:
If it be so, I'll kneel and weep before you,
With all th' obedience of a penitent Child,
Imploring pardon.
Kill me if you please,
I will not writh my Body at the wound;
But sink upon your feet with a last sigh,
And ask forgiveness with my dying hands.

Ege. O rise, and call not to this aged Cheek
The little blood which should keep warm my heart;
You are not mine, nor ought I to be blest
With such a God-like off-spring: Sir I found you
Upon the Mount Citheron.

Oed. O speak, go on, the Air grows sensible
Of the great things you utter, and is calm:
The hurry'd Orbs, with Storms so rack'd of late,
Seem to stand still, as if that *you* were talking.
Citheron! speak, the Valley of Citheron!

Ege. Ofte-times before I thither did resort,
Charm'd with the Conversation of a Man
Who led a rural life, and had command
O're all the Shepherds who about those Vales
Tended their numerous Flocks: In this Man's Arms
I saw you smiling at a fatal Dagger
Whose point he often offer'd at your throat;
But then you smil'd, and then he drew it back;
Then lifted it again, you smil'd again,
Till he at last in fury threw it from him,
And

And cry'd aloud, the Gods for bid thy death,
Then I rush'd in, and, after some discourse,
To me he did bequeath your innocent life;
And I, the welcome care to Phorbas.

Oed. To whom belongs the Master of the Shepherds?

Age. His name I knew not, or have I forgot,
That he was of the Family of Lycus,

I will remember.

Oed. And is your Friend alive? for if he be
I'll buy his presence, tho' it cost my Crown.

Age. Your menial Attendants best can tell
Whether he lives, or not; and who has now
His place.

Joc. Winds bear me to some barren Island,
Where print of humane Feet was never seen,
O're-grown with Weeds of such a monstrous height,
Their baleful tops are wash'd with bellying Clouds,
Beneath whose venomous shade I may have vent
For horror, that would blast the Barbarous World.

Oed. If there be any here that knows the person
Whom he describ'd, I charge him on his life
To speak; concealment shall be sudden death:
But he who brings him forth, shall have reward
Beyond Ambition's lust.

Tyr. His name is Phorbas;
Jocasta knows him well; but if I may
Advise, Rest where you are, and seek no farther.

Oed. Then all goes well, Since Phorbas is secure
By my Jocasta. Haste, and bring him forth;
My Love, my Queen, give Orders. Ha! what means
These Tears and Groans, and Struggings? speak my Fair;

What are thy troubles?

Joc. Yours, and yours are mine. Let me conjure you take the Prophets Counsel,
And let this Phorbas go.

Oed. Not for the World. By all the Gods, I'll know my birth, tho' death
Attends the searchin'. I have already pass'd
The middle of the Stream; and to return is a garrison well i'

Seems greater labour, than to venture o'er the water. Therefore produce him.

Joc. Once more, by the Gods,

I beg, my Oedipus, my Lord, my life.

My love, my all, my only utmost hope,

I beg you banish Phorbas: O, the Gods,
I kneel, that you may grant this first request.
Deny me all things else; but for my sake,
And as you prize your own eternal quiet,
Never let Phorbas come into your presence.

Oed. You must be rai'd, and Phorbas shall appear,
Tho' his dread eyes were Basilisks: Guards, halte,
Search the Queens Lodgings; find and force him hither.

[Exit Guards.]

Joc. O, Oedipus, yet send,
And stop their entrance, e're it be too late:
Unless you will to see Jocasta rent
With Furies, slain out-right with meer distraction,
Keep from your eyes and mine the dreadful Phorbas.
Forbear this search, I'll think you more than mortal:
Will you yet hear me?

Oed. Tempests will be heard,
And Waves will dash, tho' Rocks their basis keep—
But see, they Enter. If thou truly lov'st me,
Either forbear this subject, or retire.

Enter Hæmon, Guards, with Phorbas.

Joc. Prepare then, wretched Prince, prepare to hear
A story, that shall turn thee into Stone,
Could there be hew'n a monstrosous Gap in Nature,
A flaw made through the Center, by some God,
Through which the groans of Ghosts might strike thy ears,
They would not wound thee, as this Story will:

Hark, hark! a hollow Voice calls out aloud,

Jocasta: yes, I'll to the Royal Bed,
Where first the Mysteries of our loves were acted,
And double dye it with imperial Crimson,
Tear off this sullying hair,
Be gorg'd with Fire, stab every vital part,
And, when at last I'm slain, to Crown the horrour
My poor tormented Ghoul shall cleave the ground,
To try if Hell can yet more deeply wound.

[Ex.]

Oed. She's gone; and as she went, methought her eyes
Grew larger, while a thousand frantic Spirits
Seething, like rising bubbles, on the brim,
Peep'd from the Watry brink, and glow'd upon me.
I'll seek no more; but hush my Genius up
That throws me on my Fate.—Impossible!

O wretched Man, whose too to busy thoughts
Ride swifter than the galloping Heav'ns round,
With an eternal burry of the Soul :
Nay there's a time when ev'n the rowling year
Seems to stand still, dead Calms are in the Ocean,
When not a breath disturbs the drowsy Waves :
But Man, the very Monster of the World,
Is ne're at rest, the Soul for ever wakes.
Come then, since Destiny thus drives us on,
Let's know the bottom. *Eteon, you I sent:*
Where is that *Phorbas*?

Hem. Here, my Royal Lord.

Oed. Speak first, *Egeon,* say, is this the Man ?

Ege. My Lord it is : Tho' time has plough'd that face,
With many furrows since I saw it first ;
Yet I'm too well acquainted with the ground, quite to forget it.

Oed. Peace; stand back a while.
Come hither Friend; I hear thy name is *Phorbas*.
Why dost thou turn thy face ? I charge thee answer
To what I shall enquire : Wert thou not once
The Servant of King *Laius* here in *Thebes* ?

Phor. I was, great Sir, his true and faithful Servant ;
Born and bred up in Court, no foreign Slave.

Oed. What Office hadst thou ? what was thy Employment ?

Phor. He made me Lord of all his Rural pleasures ;
For much he lov'd 'em; oft I entertain'd

With sporting *Syrians*, o're whom I had command.

Oed. Where was thy Residence ? to what part o'th' Country

Didst thou most frequently resort ?

Phor. To Mount *Citheron*, and the pleasant Vallies
Which all about lye shadowing its large feet.

Oed. Come forth, *Egeon*. Ha ! why starts thou, *Phorbas* ?
Forward, I say, and Face to Face confront him,
Look wistly on him, through him if thou canst,
And tell me on thy Life, say, dost thou know him ;
Didst thou e're see him ? converse with him ;
Near Mount *Citheron* ?

Phor. Who, my Lord, this Man ?

Oed. This Man, this old, this venerable Man.

Speak, didst thou ever meet him there ?

Phor. Where, sacred Sir ?

Oed. Near Mount *Citheron*; answer to the purpose :

Tis a King speaks ; and Royal minutes are

Of much more worth than thousand Vulgar years :

Didst thou e're see this Man near Mount Citharon?

Phor. Most sure, my Lord, I have seen lines like those.
His Village bears; but know not where nor when.

Oed. Is't possible you should forget your ancient Friend?
There are perhaps

Particulars, which may excite your dead remembrance.

Have you forgot I took an Infant from you;

Doom'd to be murder'd in that gloomy Vale:

The swaddling bands were Purple, wrought with Gold,

Have you forgot too how you wept and begg'd

That I should breed him up, and ask no more?

Phor. What-e're I begg'd, thou, like a Dotard, speak'st

More than is requisite: and what of this?

Why is it mention'd now? and why, O why

Doth thou betray the Secrets of thy Friend?

Oed. Be not too rash. That Infant grew at last

A King: and here the happy Monarch stands.

Phor. Ha! whither wouldst thou? O what hast thou utter'd!

For what thou hast said, Death strike thee dumb for ever.

Oed. Forbear to Curse the innocent; and be

Accurst thy self, thou shifting Traitor, Villain,

Damn'd Hypocrite, equivocating Slave.

Phor. O Heav'ns! wherein, my Lord, have I offended?

Oed. Why speak you not according to my charge?

Bring forth the Rack: since mildness cannot win you,

Torments shall force.

Phor. Hold, hold, O dreadful Sir,

You will not Rack an innocent old man.

Oed. Speak then.

Phor. Alas, what would you have me say?

Oed. Did this old man take from your Arms an Infant?

Phor. He did: And, Oh! I wish to all the Gods,

Phor. Was had perish'd in that very moment.

Oed. Moment! Thou shalt be hours, days, years a dying.

Here, bind his hands; he dallies with my fury:

But I shall find a way—

Phor. My Lord, I said

I gave the Infant to him.

Oed. Was he thy own, or given thee by another?

Phor. He was not mine; but given me by another.

Oed. Whence! and from whom? what City? of what House?

Phor. O, Royal Sir, I bow me to the ground,

Would I could sink beneath it- by the Gods,

I do Conjurè you to enquire no more.

Oed.

Oed. Furies and Hell! Hemon, bring forth the Rack;
Fetch hither Cords, and Knives, and Sulphurous flames.
He shall be bound, and gash'd, his skin head off,
And burnt alive.

Phor. O spare my age.

Oed. Rise then, and speak.

Phor. Dread Sir, I will.

Oed. Who gave that Infant to thee?

Phor. One of King Laius' Family.

Oed. O, you immortal Gods! but say, who was it?
Which of the Family of Laius gave it?

A Servant; or one of the Royal-Blood?

Phor. O Wretched State! I dye, unless I speak;
And, if I speak, most certain death attends me!

Oed. Thou shalt not dye. Speak then, who was it? speak,
While I have sense to understand the horrour,
For I grow cold.

Phor. The Queen ~~Jocasta~~ told me
It was her Son by ~~Laius~~.

Oed. O you Gods! — But did she give it thee?

Phor. My Lord, she did.

Oed. Wherefore? for what? — O break not yet my heart,
Tho' my eyes burst, no matter; wilt thou tell me,
Or must I ask for ever? for what end?
Why gave she thee her Child?

Phor. To murder it.

Oed. O more than savage! murder her own bowels!
Without a Cause!

Phor. There was a dreadful one,
Which had foretold, that most unhappy Son
Should kill his Father, and enjoy his Mother.

Oed. But, one thing more,
~~Jocasta~~ told me thou wert by the Chariot
When the old King was slain? Speak, I conjure thee,
For I shall never ask thee ought again,
What was the number of th' Assassins?

Phor. The dreadful deed was acted but by one;
And sure that one had much of your resemblance.

Oed. 'Tis well; I thank you Gods! 'tis wondrous well!
Daggers, and Poyson; O there is no need
For my dispatch; and you, you merciless Pow'rs,
Hord up your Thunder-stones; keep, keep your Bolts.
For Crimes of little note.

Adr. Help, Hemon, help, and bow him gently forward;
Chafe,

Chafe, chafe his Temples : how the mighty Spirits,
Half strangled with the damp his sorrows rais'd,
Struggle for vent : but see, he breaths again,
And vigorous Nature breaks through all opposition.
How fares my Royal Friend ?

Oed. The worse for you.

O barbarous men, and oh the hated light,
Why did you force me back to curse the day ;
To curse my Friends ; to blast with this dark breath
The yet untainted Earth and circling Air ?
To raise new Plagues, and call new Vengeance down,
Why did you tempt the Gods, and dare to touch me ?
Methinks there's not a hand that grasps this Hell
But should run up like Flax all blazing fire.
Stand from this spot, I wish you as my Friends,
And come not near me, lest the gaping Earth
Swallow you too —— Lo, I am gone already.

*Draws, and claps his Sword to his breast, which Adrastus
strikes away with his foot.*

Adr. You shall no more be trusted with your life :
Creon, Alcander, Hamon, help to hold him.
Oed. Cruel Adrastus ! wilt thou, Hamon, too ?
Are these the Obligations of my Friends,
O worse than worst of my most barbarous Foes !
Dear, dear Adrastus, look with half an eye
On my unheard of Woes, and judge thy self,
If it be fit that such a wretch should live !
O, by these melting Eyes, unus'd to weep,
With all the low submissions of a Slave,
I do conjure thee give my horrors way ;
Talk not of life, for that will make me rave :
As well thou mayst advise a tortur'd wretch,
All mangled o're from head to foot with wounds,
And his bones broke, to wait a better day.

Adr. My Lord, you ask me things impolible ;
And I with Justice should be thought your Foe,
To leave you in this Tempest of your Soul.

Adr. Tho' banish'd Thebes, in Corinth you may Reign
Th' Infernal Pow'rs themselves exact no more :
Calm then your rage, and once more seek the Gods.

Oed. I'll have no more to do with Gods, nor Men :
Hence from my Arms, avant. Enjoy thy Mother !

What

What, violate, with Beastly appetite,
The sacred Veils that wrapt thee yet unborn,
This is not to be born; hence, off, I say;
For they who lett my Vengeance, make themselves
Accomplices in my most horrid guilt.

Adv. Let it be so; we'll fence Heav'ns fury from you,
And suffer all together: This perhaps,
When ruine comes, may help to break your fall.

Oed. O that, as oft I have at Athens seen
The Stage arise, and the big Clouds descend,
So now in very deed I might behold
The pond'rous Earth, and all you marble Roof
Meet, like the hands of Jove, and crush Mankind:
For all the Elements, and all the Pow'rs
Celestial, nay, Terrestrial and Infernal,
Conspire the rack of out-cast *Oedipus*.
Fall darkness then, and everlasting night,
Shadow the Globe; may the Sun never dawn,
The Silver Moon be blotted from her Orb,
And for an universal rout of Nature
Through all the inmost Chambers of the Sky,
May there not be a glimpe, one Starry spark,
But Gods meet Gods, and justice in the dark.
That jars may rise, and wrath Divine be hurl'd,
Which may to Atoms shake the solid World.

[Exeunt.

A C T

ACT V. SCENE I.

Creon, Alcander, Pyracmon:

Cre. **T**HESSES is at length my own; and all my wilts, did wst full
 Which sure were great as Royalty e're form'd.
 Fortune and my auspicious Stars have Crown'd.
 O Diadem, thou Center of ambition,
 Where all its different Lines, are reconcil'd,
 As if thou wert the burning glass of Glory!

Pyr. Might I be Counsellor, I woud intreat you
 To cool a little, Sir;
 Find out Eurydice;
 And, with the resolution of a man
 Mark'd out for greatness, give the fatal Choice
 Of death or marriage.

Alc. Survey cur'st Oedipus, his sorri bairn, his quew, his sonn, his
 As one who, tho' unfortunate, 's belov'd, to solond abt
 Thought innocent, and therefore much lamented
 By all the Thebans; you must mark him dead:
 Since nothing but his death, nor banishment,
 Can give assurance to your doubtful Reign.

Cre. Well have you done, to match me from the storm
 Of racking Transport, where the little streams
 Of Love, Revenge, and all the under passions,
 As waters are by sucking Whirl-pools drawn,
 Were quite devour'd in the vast Gulph of Empire.
 Therefore, Pyracmon, as you boldly urg'd,
 Enrifice shall dye, or be my Brides; above
 Alcander, Summon to their Master's aid
 My Menial Servants, and all those whom change
 Of State, and hope of the new Monarch's favour,
 Can win to take our part: Away. What now?

[Ex. Alcander.]

Ember Hamon.

When Hamon weeps, without the help of Ghosts,
 I may foretell there is a fatal Cause.
 Ham. Is't possible you should be ignorant
 Of what has happen'd to the desperate King?

Cre.

Cre. I know no more, but that he was conducted
Into his Closet, where I saw him fling
His trembling Body on the Royal Bed:
All left him there, at his desire, alone:
But sure no ill, unless he dy'd with grief,
Could happen, for you bore his Sword away.

Hem. I did; and, having lock'd the door, I stood,
And through a chink I found, not only heard,
But saw him, when he thought no eye beheld him
At first, deep sighs heav'd from his woful heart,
Murmurs and groans, that shook the outward Room,
And art thou still alive, Oh wretched he cry'd,
Then groan'd again, as if his sorrowful Soul
Had crack'd the strings of Life, and burst away.

Cre. I weep to hear; how then should I have grieved
Had I beheld this wondrous heap of Sorrow!
But, to the fatal period.

Hem. Thrice he struck,
With all his force, his hollow groaning breast,
And thus, with out-cries, to himself complain'd,
But thou ca'st weep then, and thou think'st 'tis wretchedness
These bubbles of the shallowest emptiest sorrow,
Which Children vent for toys, and Women, for
For any Trifle their fond Hearts are set on, yet 'tis small wonder
Yet these thou think'st are ample Incantations, and a reason
For bloudiest Murder, and for burning Lust,
No, Parricide, If thou must weep, weep blood,
Weep Eyes, instead of Tears: O, by the Gods,
'Tis greatly thought, he cry'd, and fits my woes.
Which said, he smil'd revengefully, and leaps
Upon the floor; thence gazing at the Skies,
His Eye-balls fiery Red, and glowing vengeance,
Gods, I accuse you not, tho' I no more
Will view your Heav'n, till with more durable glasses,
The mighty Soul's Immortal Perspectives,
I find your dazzling Beings: Take, he cry'd,
Thine Eyes, your last, your fatal farewell-view,
When with a groan, that seem'd the call of Death,
With horrid force lifting his impious hands,
He snatch'd, he tore, from forth their bloody Orbs,
The Balls of sight, and dash'd 'em on the ground.

Cre. A Master-piece of horrour, now and dreadfully I see it
Hem. I ran to succour him, but, oh too late, I fled
For he had pluck'd the remnant living swagg o' d'ngger and undw' What

O E D I P O S .

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What then remains, but that I find *Treasure*,
Who, with his Wisdom, may allay those Furies
That haunt his gloomy Soul?

Cre. Heav'n will reward
Thy care; most honest, faithful, foolish *Hamm*?
But see, *Alecsander* enters, well attended.

Enter Alecsander, attended.

I see thou hast been diligent.

Ale. Nothing these,
For Number, to the Clouds that soon will follow;
Be resolute,
And call your utmost Fury to revenge.

Cre. Ha! thou hast given
Th' Alarm to Cruelty; and never may
These eyes be clos'd, till they behold *Adrafin*.
Stretch'd at the feet of false *Eurydice*.
But see, they're here! retire a while, and mark.

Enter Adrafin, Eurydice, attended.

Adv. Alas, *Eurydice*, what fond rash man,
What inconsiderate and ambitious Fool,
That shall hereafter read the Fate of *Oedipus*,
Will dare, with his frail hand, to grasp a Scepter?

Env. 'Tis true, a Crown seems dreadful, and I wish
That you and I, more lowly plac'd, might pass
Our softer hours in humble Cells away:
Not but I love you to that infinite height,
I could (O wondrous proof of fiercest Love)
Be greatly wretched in a Coart with you.

Adv. Take then this most lov'd innocence away;
*Fly from tumultuous *Thebes*,*
From blood and Murder,
Fly from the Author of all Villanies,
Rapes, Death, and Treason, from that Fury *Creon*:
Vouchsafe that I, o're-joy'd, may bear you hence,
And at your Feet present the Crown of Argos.

Creon and Attendants come up to him.

Cre. I have o're-heard thy black design, *Adrafin*:
And therefore, as a Traitor to this State,

I 2

Death

Death ought to be thy Lot; let it suffice
That *Thebes* surveys thee as a Prince; abuse not
Her proffer'd mercy, but retire betimes, *Iago* v. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.
Lest the repent and hasten on thy Doom.

Adr. Think not, most abject, of leaving, *Adrastus* from *Adrastus*, *Act* v. 1.
Most abhor'd of Men,

Adrastus will vouchsafe to answer thee;

Thebans, to you I justify my Love:

I have address'd my Prayers to this fair Prince;

But, if I ever meant a violence, *need* *such* *hostile* *feel* *hostile* *feel* *hostile* *feel* *hostile*

Or thought to Ravish, as that *Traytor* did,

What humblest Adorations could not win,

Brand me, you Gods, blot me with foul dishonour,

And let men curse me by the name of *Croesus*.

Eur. Hear me, O *Thebans*, if you dread the wrath of *God*,

Of her whom Fate ordain'd to be your Queen,

Hear me, and dare not, as you prize your lives,

To take the part of that Rebellious *Traytor*,

By the Decree of Royal *Oedipus*,

By Queen *Jocasta's* order, by what's more,

My own dear Vows of everlasting Love,

I here resign to Prince *Adrastus' Arme*

All that the World can make me Mistress of.

Cre. O perjur'd Woman!

Draw all; and when I give the word, fall on.

Traytor, resign the Prince, or this moment

Expect, with all those most unfortunate wretches,

Upon this spot straight to be hewn in pieces.

Adr. No, Villain, no;

With twice those odds of men,

I doubt not in this Caule,

To vanquish thee.

Captain, remember to your care I give

My Love, ten thousand thousand times more dearely than my selfe,

Than Life, or Liberty.

Cre. Fall on, *Alexander*.

Pyramus, you and I must wheel about,

For nobler Game, the Prince.

Adr. Ah, *Traytor*, dost thou thin me?

Follow, follow,

My brave Companions; see, the Cowards fly.

[Ex. fighting; Creon's Party beaten off by Adrastus.]

Re-enter *Adrastus* from *Adrastus*, *Act* v. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Enter Oedipus.

Oed. O, 'tis too little this, thy loss of sight,
 What has it done? I shall be gaz'd at now.
 The more; be pointed at, there goes the Monster?
 Not have I hid my horrors from my self;
 For tho' corporeal light be lost for ever,
 The bright reflecting Soul, through Glaring Opticks,
 Presents in larger size her black ideas,
 Doubling the bloody prospect of my Crimes,
 Holds Fancy down, and makes her act again,
 With Wife and Mother, Tortures, Hell, and Furies.
 Ha! now the bateful off-spring's brought to light!
 In horrid form they rank themselves before me.
 What shall I call this Medley of Creation?
 Here one, with all th' obedience of a Son,
 Borrowing Jocasta's look, kneels at my Feet,
 And calls me Father, there a sturdy Boy,
 Resembling Laius just as when I kill'd him,
 Bears up, and with his cold hand grasping mine,
 Cries out, how fares my Brother Oedipus?
 What, Sons and Brothers! Sisters and Daughters too?
 Fly all, begon, fly from my whirling brain;
 Hence, incest, Murder; hence, you ghastly figures!
 O Gods! Gods, answer; is there any mean?
 Let me go mad, or dye.

Enter Jocasta.

Joc. Where, where is this most wretched of mankind,
 This stately Image of imperial Sorrow,
 Whose story sold, whose very name but mentioned,
 Would cool the rage of Feavers, and unlock
 The hand of Lust from the pall Virgin's hair,
 And throw the Ravisher before her feet?

Oed. By all my fears, I think Jocasta's voice
 Hence, fly; begon: O thou far worse than wretched
 Of damning Charmers! O abhor'd, loath'd Creature,
 Fly, by the Gods, or by the Fiends, I charge thee,
 Far as the East, West, North, or South of Heaven,
 But think not thou shalt ever enter there:
 The Golden Gates are barr'd with Adamant,
 Gaints thee, and me; and the Celestial Guards.

Well,

SCE.

Still as we rise, will dash our Spirits down.

Joc. O wretched Pair! O greatly wretched we!

Two Worlds of Woe!

Oed. Art thou not gone then? he
How darst thou stand the Fury of the Gods?
Or com'st thou in the Grave to fear new pleasures?

Joc. Talk on: till thou mak'st mad my sorrowing brain.
Groan still more Death, and may those dismal sources
Still bubble on, and pour forth blood and tears.
Methinks at such a meeting, Heaven's Troubles will,
The Sea nor Ebbs, nor Flows: this Mole-Hill earth
Is heav'd no more: the baleful Emmets cease;
Yet hear me on —

Oed. Speak then, and plain my Soul.
Joc. O, my lov'd Lord, then I resolve a Ruine
To match my Crimes; by all my Miseries,
'Tis horrour, worse than thousand thousand Deaths,
To send me hence without a kind farewell.

Oed. Gods, how she shakes me: — O Spare her! —
Speak something e're thou goest for ever from me.

Joc. 'Tis Womans Weakness, that I would be pitied.
Pardon me then, O greatest, tho' most-wretched,
Of all thy Kind: my Soul is on the brink,
And sees the boiling Furnace just beneath:
Do not thou push me off, and I will go
With such a willingness, as if that Heav'n
With all its glories glow'd for my reception.

Oed. O, in my heart, I feel the pangs of Nature;
It works with kindness o're: Give, give me way;
I feel a melting here, a tenderoels,
Too mighty for the anger of the Gods!
Direct me to thy knees, yet oh forbear:
Lest the dead embers should revive,
Stand off — and at full distance
Let me groan my horrour! — here
On the Earth, here blow my unmit Gale;
Here sob my Sorrow, till I burst with fitting:
Here gasp and Languish out my wounded Soul.

Yor. In spight of all those Crimes the cruel Gods
Can charge me with, I know my innocence;
Know yours: 'tis Fate alone that makes us wretched,
For you are still my Husband.

Oed. Swear I am,
And I'll believe thee; I cast into thy Arms,

Renew endearments, think 'em no pollutions,
But chaste as Spirits joys: gently I'll come,
Thus weeping blind, like dewy Night, upon thee,
And fold thee softly in my Arms to slumbers.

[The Ghost of Lajos ascends by degrees pointing at József.]

*For Begon, my Lord! Alas, what are we doing?
Fly from my Arms! Whirl-winch, Seas, Continents,
And Worlds, divide us. O thrice happy thou,
Who hast no use of Eyes, for here's a sight
Would turn the melting face of Mercy's self.
To a wild Fury.*

Oed. Hal! what seest thou there?

For The Spirit of my Husband! O the Gods!
How wan he looks!

Oed. Thou rav'lt; thy Husband's here.

Joe. There, there ho mounts,
In circling fire, amongst the blushing Claude!
And see, he waves to us from the World.

Ghost. To-ka-te. Octopus. [Vanish with Thunder.]

Old. What wouldst thou have?
Thou know'st I cannot come to thee, detain'd
In darkness here, and kept from means of death.
I've heard a Spirit's voice is wond'ring round,
At whole approach, when starting from his Dungeon;
The Earth does shake, and the wide Ocean groans;
Rocks are remov'd, and Towers are foun'd down;
And walls of Brass, and Gates of Adamant,
Are passable as Air, and feet like Wind.

*For Was that a Raven's Cloak or my Son's Voice
No matter which I'll go to the Graves and hide me.*

Hark! he goes on, and blabs the secret of himself.

*Ed. Strike then, Imperial Chell; dash all at once
This House of Clay into a thousand pieces!*

**That my poor Jingring Soul may take her flight
To your immortal Dwellings.**

Joe. Haste thee then,
Or I shall be before thee : See, thou canst not set ;
Then I will tell thee that my wings are on :
I'll mount, I'll fly, and with a port Divine
Glide all along the gaudy Milky boiL,
To find my *Louis* out ; ask every God

In his bright Palace, if he know my *Laius*,
My murder'd *Laius*!

Oed. Ha! how's this, *Jocasta*? Nay, I will
Nay, if thy brain be sick, then thou art happy.

Joc. Ha! will you not? Shall I not find him out?
Will you not show him? are my tears deliv'd?

Why, then I'll Thunder, yes, I will be mad,
And fright you with my cries: yes, cruel Gods,

Tho' Vultures, Eagles, Dragons tear my heart,
I'll snatch Celestial flames, fire all your Dwellings,

Melt down your golden Roof, and make your doors
Of Crystal flye from off their Diamond Hinges;

Drive you all out from your Ambrosial Hives,
To swarm like Bees about the field of Heaven!

This will I do, unless you shew me *Laius*, I'm to ring & cut off
My dear, my Murder'd Lord. O *Laius!* *Laius!* *Laius!*

[Ex. *Jocasta*.]

Oed. Excellent grief! why, this is as it should be!
No Mourning can be suitable to Crimes

Like ours, but what Death makes, or Murther forms,
I could have wish'd methought for light again,

To mark the gallantry of her distraction:
Her blazing Eyes darting the wandering Star,

I have seen her mouth the Heart's, and make the Gods,
While with her Thundring Voice the menac'd high,

And every Accent swang'd with smarting sorrow;
But what's all this to thee? thou Coward yet,

Art living, canst not, wilt not find the Road
To the great Palace of magnificient Death;

Tho' thousand ways lead to his thousand doors,
Which day and night are still unbarr'd for all.

[Clashing of Swords. Drums and Trumpets without.]

Hark! 'tis the noise of clashing Swords! the sound
Comes near: O, that a Battle would come o're me!

If I but grasp a Sword, or wrest a Dagger,
I'll make a ruine with the first that falls.

[Enter Hemon, with Guards.]

Hem. Seize him, and bear him to the Western-Town.
Pardon me, sacred Sir; I am inform'd
That Creon has designs upon you life.

[Forgive.

Forgive me then, if, to preserve you from him,
I order your Confinement.

Oed. Slaves unhand me.

I think thou hast a Sword : 'twas the wrong side.

Yet, cruel *Hamon*, think not I will live ;

He that could tear his eyes out, sure can find

Some desperate way to stifle this curs'd breath ;

Or if I starve ! but that's a loo'ring Fate ;

Or if I leave my brains upon the wall !

The Aicry Soul can easily o're-shoot

Those bounds with which thou striv'st to pale her in :

Yes, I will perish in despite of thee ;

And, by the rage that stirs me, if I meet thee

In the other World, I'll curse thee for this usage.

[Exit.]

Ham. *Tiresias*, after him ; and with your Counsel

Advise him humbly ; *Charm*, if possible,

These feuds within : while I without extinguish,

Or perish in th' Attempt, the Furious *Creon*,

That Brand which sets our City in a Flame.

Tir. Heav'n prosper your intent, and give a period

To all your Plagues : what old *Tiresias* can

Shall straight be done. Lead, *Manto* the Tow'r. [Ex. *Tir.* *Manto*.]

Ham. Follow me all, and help to part this Day, [Trumpets again.]
Or fall together in the bloody broil. [Ex.]

Enter *Creon* with *Eurydice*, *Pyremon* and his Party giving ground to *Adrastus*.

Cre. Hold, hold your Arms, *Adrastus* Prince of *Argos*,
Hear, and behold ; *Eurydice* is my Prisoner.

Adr. What wouldst thou, Hell-hound ?

Cre. See this brandish'd Dagger :

Forgo th' advantage which thy Arms have won,
Or, by the blood which trembles through the heart
Of her whom more than life I know thou lov'st,
I'll bury to the haft, in her fair Breast,
This instrument of my Revenge.

Adr. Stay thee, damn'd wretch ; hold, stop thy bloody hand.

Cre. Give order then, that on this instant now,
This moment, all thy Soldiers straight disband.

Adr. Away my Friends, since Fate has so allotted :
Begon, and leave me to the Villain's mercy.

Eur. Ah, my *Adrastus* ! call 'em, call 'em back !
Stand there ; come back ! O, cruel barbarous Men !

Could you then leave your Lord, your Prince, your King,
After so bravely having fought his Cause,
To perish by the hand of this base V^Hlain? ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
W^{hy} rather rush you not at once together, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
All to his ruine? drag him through the Streets, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Hang his contagious Quarters on the Gates, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Nor let my death affright you. ^{not to say} ^{not to say}

Cre. Dye first thy self then. ^{not to say} ^{not to say} ^{not to say}

Adr. O, I charge thee hold. ^{not to say} ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Hence, from my presente all: he's not my friend ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
That disobeys: See, art thou now appeas'd? ^{not to say} ^{not to say} *[Ex. Attendants.]*
Or is there ought else yet remains to do
That can attone thee? flake thy thirst of blood ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
With mine: but save, O save that innocent wretch.

Cre. Forego thy Sword, and yield thy self my Prisoner.

Env. Yet while there's any daws of hope to save,
Thy precious life, my dear *Adr. fau*, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
What e're thou dost, deliver not thy Sword, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
With that thou mayst get off, tho' odds oppose thee. ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
For me, O, fear not; no, he dares not touch me;
His horrid love will spare me. Keep thy Sword, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Lest I be ravish'd after thou art slain.

Adr. Instruct me, Gods! what shall *Adr. fau* do? ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Cre. Do what thou wil, when she is dead: my Soldiers, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
With numbers will o're-pow'r thee. Is't thy wish
Eurydice should fall before thee? ^{not to say} ^{not to say}

Adr. Traytor, no: ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Better that thou and I, and all mankind
Should be no more. ^{not to say} ^{not to say}

Creon. Then cast thy Sword away, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
And yield thee to my mercy, or I strike. ^{not to say} ^{not to say}

Adr. Hold thy rais'd Arm; give me a moments pause: ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
My Father, when he blest me, gave me this ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
My Son, said he, let this be thy last refuge; ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
If thou forego'st it, misery attends thee: ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Yet Lov^e, now charms it from me, which in all ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
The hazard is of my life I never lost.
'Tis thine, my faithful Sword, my only troth, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Tho' my heart tells me that the gift is fatal.

Cre. Fatal! yes, foolish Love-sick Prince, it shall be ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Thy arrogancy, t^o thy scorn, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
My wounds rememb'rance, ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Turn all at once the fatal point upon thee. ^{not to say} ^{not to say}
Pyramon, to the Palace dispatch. ^{not to say} ^{not to say}

The

The King: hang Hamon up, for he is Loyal, and will be seen
And will oppose me: Come, Sir, are you ready?

Adr. Yes, Villain, for what ever thou canst dare,

Eur. Hold, Creon, or through me, through me you wound,

Adr. Off. Madam, or we perish both; behold

I'm not unarm'd, my Poniard's in my hand:
Therefore away.

Env. I'll guard your life with mine.

Cr. Dye both then; there is now no time for dallying.

Kills Eurydice.

Erw. Ah, Prince, farewell! farewell, my dear Adrastus. [Dyes.
The hand of Marshal's eldest born of Hell!

Adr. Unheard of Monitor! eldest born of Hell!

Down, to thy Primitive Flames. [Strabs Creon.]

Cre. Help, Souldiers, help :

Revenge me.

Adr. More

I'll stamp thee still, thus, to the gaping Furies.
Aadraene falls - helped by the Semidivine.

Ladrautos fays, said by the Spaniards.

the Assassins are driven off.

O *Hamon*, I am slain ; nor need I name
The inhumane Author of all Villanies ;
There he lies gasping.

Cry. If I must plunge in Flames,
Burn first my Arm, base Instrument, unfit
To act the dictates of my daring mind:
Burn, burn for ever, O weak substitute
Of that, the God, Ambition. [Dier.]

Adr. She's gone ; O deadly marks-man, in the heart !
Yet in the pangs of death she grasps my hand :
Her lips too tremble, as if she would speak
Her last Farewell. O, *Oedipus*, thy fall
Is great, and nobly now thougoest attended !
They talk of Heroes, and Celestial beauties,
And wondrous pleasures in the other World ;
Let me but find her there, I ask no more.

Enter a Captain to Hamon: with Tiresias and Manto.

*Cap. O, Sir, the Queen forsooth, swift and wild,
As a robb'd Tygres bounding o're the Woods.*

O E D I P U S .

Has acted Murders that smote Mankind :
In twisted Gold I saw her Daughters hang
On the Bed Royal ; and her little Sons
Stabb'd through the breasts upon the bloody Pillows.

Ham. Relentless Heav'n ! is then the Fate of *Jocas.*
Never to be Aton'd ? How sacred ought
Kings lives be held, when but the Death of one
Demands an Empire's blood for Expiation ?
But see ! the furious mad *Jocasta*'s here.

*Scene Draws, and discovers Jocasta held by her Women, and stabb'd
in many places of her bosom, her hair dishevel'd, her Children
slain upon the Bed.*

Was ever such a sight of so much horrour,
And pity, brought to view !

Joc. Ah, cruel Women !
Will you not let me take my last farewell
Of those dear Babes ? O let me run and seal
My melting Soul upon their bubbling wounds ! -
I'll print upon their Coral mouths such Kisses,
As shall recall their wandring Spirits home.
Let me go, let me go, or I will tear you piece-meal.
Help, *Hamon*, help :
Help *Oedipus*, help, Gods ; *Jocasta* Dyes.

Enter *Oedipus* above.

Oed. I've found a Window, and I thank the Gods
'Tis quite unbarr'd : sure by the distant noise,
The height will fit my Fatal purpose well.

Joc. What hoa, my *Oedipus* ; see where he stands !
His groping Ghoul is lodg'd upon a Tow'r,
Nor can it find the Road : Mount, mount my Soul ;
I'll wrap thy shivering Spirit in Lambent Flames ! and so we'll sail :
But see ! we're landed on the happy Coast ;
And all the Golden Strands are cover'd o're
With Glorious Gods, that come to try our Cause :
Jove, *Jove*, whose Majesty now sinks me down,
He who himself burns in undawful fires,
Shall judge, and shall acquit us. O, 'tis done ;
'Tis fixt by Fate, upon Record Divine :
And *Oedipus* shall now be ever mine.

Oed. Speak, *Hamon*, what has Fate been doing there ?

What dreadful deed has mad *Jocasta* done ?

Ham. The Queen her self, and all your wretched Off-spring,
Are by her Fury slain.

[Dyes.

Oed.

Oed. By all my Woes,
 She has out-done me, in Revenge and Murder;
 And I should envy her the sad applause:
 But, Oh! my Children! Oh, what have they done?
 This was not like the mercy of the Heav'ns,
 To set her madness on such Cruelty:
 This stirs me more than all my sufferings,
 And with my last breath I must call you Tyrants.

Ham. What mean you, Sir?

Oed. Jocasta! lo, I come.
 O *Laius, Labdacus*, and all you Spirits
 Of the Cadmean Race, prepare to meet me,
 All weeping rang'd along the gloomy Shore;
 Extend your Arms t' embrace me; for I come;
 May all the Gods too from their Battlements
 Behold and wonder at a Mortal's daring;
 And, when I knock the Goal of dreadful death,
 Shout and applaud me with a clap of Thunder:
 Once more, thus wing'd by horrid Fate, I come
 Swift as a falling Meteor; lo, I flye,
 And thus go downwards, to the darker Sky.

[Thunder. He flings himself from the Window.

The Thebans gather about his Body.

Hamon. O Prophet, *Oedipus* is now no more!
 O curs'd Effect of the most deep Despair!
 Oed. Cease your Complaints, and bear his body hence:
 The dreadful sight will daunt the drooping Thebans,
 Whom Heav'n decrets to raise with Peace and Glory:
 Yet by these terrible Examples warn'd,
 The sacred Fury that Alarms the World.
 Let none, tho' ne're so Virtuous, Great, and High,
 Be judg'd entirely blest before they Dye.

EPILOGUE.

WHAT Sophocles could undertake alone;
 Our Poets found a Work for more than one; so
 And therefore Two lay tugging at the piece,
 With all their force, to draw the ponderous Mass from Greece:
 A weight that bent ev'n Seneca's strong Mind,
 And which Corneille's Shoulders did refuse,
 So hard it is th' Athenian Hand to bring!
 So much two Consuls yoldire one just thing,
 Terror and pity this whole Plain sway;
 The mightiest Machine that can mount a Play,
 How heavy will those Vulgar Sons be found,
 Whom two such Engines cannot move, from ground,
 When Greece and Rome have smil'd upon this Birth,
 You can but Damn for one poor spot of Earth,
 And when your Children find your judgment such, illit a new
 They'll scorn their Sires, and wifl themselves born Dutch;
 Each haughty Poet will infer with ease,
 How much his Wit must under-write to please.
 As some strong Churl would brandishing advance
 The monumental Sword that conquer'd France;
 So you by judging this, your judgment's reach
 Thus far you like, that is that far you reach,
 Since then she Rose of full two Thousand years,
 Has Crown'd this Plot, and all the Dead are theirs;
 Think it a Debt you pay, nor think you gain,
 And in your own defence, let this Play live.
 Think 'em not vain, when Sophocles is shown,
 To praise his worth, they humbly doubt their own.
 Yet as weak States each others pow'r assure,
 Weak Poets by Conjunction are secure,
 Their Treat is what your Pallats relish most,
 Charm! Song! and Show! a Murder, and a Ghost!
 We know not what you can desire or hope,
 To please you more, but burning of a Pope.

FINIS.